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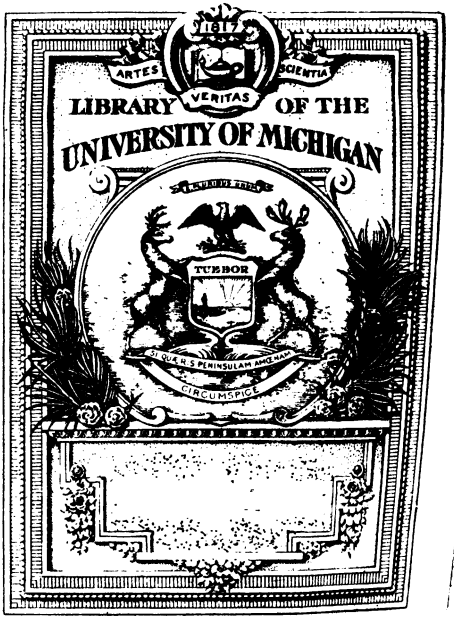

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Here, said I, here once flourished an opulent city, here was the seat of a powerful empire. *Ch II*

O.H.Throop Sc.

IV. F CH.

THE

RUINS,

OR A

SURVEY

OF THE

REVOLUTIONS OF EMPIRES.

BY C. F. VOLNEY,

ONE OF THE DEPUTIES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF 1789, AND AUTHOR OF TRAVELS IN SYRIA AND EGYPT.

A NEW TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH.

I will go and dwell in solitude amidst the ruins of cities: I will enquire of the monuments of antiquity, what was the wisdom of former ages: I will awaken and call forth from the dormitory of sepulchres, the spirit that once gave animation and splendour to the states of Asia, and glory to the people: I will ask the ashes of legislators what causes have operated in the rise and downfal of empires; what are the constituent principles of national prosperity and misfortunes; what the genuine maxims, upon which the peace of society and the happiness of man ought to be founded.—Chap. IV. page 28.

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PREFACE

To the Philadelphia Edition, published in 1799.

THE plan of this publication was formed nearly twelve years ago; and allusions to it may be seen in the Preface to Travels in Syria and Egypt, as well as at the end of the work, published in 1787. The performance was in some forwardness when the events of 1788 in France interrupted it. Persuaded that a development of the theory of political truth could not sufficiently acquit a citizen of his debt to society, the author wished to add practice; and that particularly at a time when a single arm was of consequence in the defence of the general cause. The same desire of public benefit which induced him to suspend his work, has since engaged him to resume it; and though it may not possess the same merit as if it had appeared under the circumstances that gave rise to it, yet he imagines that at a time when new passions are bursting forth, passions that must communicate their activity to the religious opinion of men, it is of importance to disseminate such moral truths as are calculated to operate as a sort of curb and restraint. It is with this view he has endeavoured to give to these truths, hitherto treated as abstract, a form likely to gain them a reception. It was found impossible not to shock the violent prejudices of some readers, but the work, so far from being the fruit of a disorderly and perturbed spirit, has been dictated by a sincere lover of order and humanity.

11-7-33 CDR

After reading this performance it will be asked, how it was possible, in 1784, to have had an idea of what did not take place until the year 1790. The solution is simple: in the original plan the legislator was a fictitious and hypothetical being: in the present, the author has substituted an existing legislator; and the reality has only made the subject additionally interesting.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT has long been matter of complaint among French writers, that those publications of theirs, which have been rendered into English, contain many inaccuracies and false translations. These arise from the greater part of those, who translate works from one language into another, pursuing that business as a profession, in order to obtain a living; their circumstances are necessitous, which too often compel them to hurry through their translations, without paying that attention which is always necessary to investigate the true meaning of the author; to develop an ambiguous expression—to discover and reject, the obsolete meaning of a word, would consume too much time; hence arise false translations, &c. But in this edition the translator was not under necessitous circumstances; he undertook it to oblige a friend, and had frequent opportunities of consulting the author, and several gentlemen distinguished equally for their knowledge of the French as of the English language.

INVOCATION.

HAIL, ye solitary Ruins, Ye sacred Tombs, and silent Walls! 'Tis your auspicious aid that I invoke, 'tis to You my Soul wrapt in meditation, pours forth its prayer! What though the profane and vulgar mind shrinks with dismay from your august and awe-inspiring aspect, to me ye unfold the sublimest charms of contemplation and sentiment, and offer to my senses the luxury of a thousand delicious and enchanting thoughts! How sumptuous the feast to a being, that has a taste to relish, and an understanding to consult you! What rich and noble admonitions, what exquisite and pathetic lessons do you read to a heart, that is susceptible of exalted feelings! When oppressed humanity bent in timid silence throughout the globe beneath the galling yoke of slavery, it was you that proclaimed aloud the birthright of those truths, which tyrants tremble at while they detest; and which, by sinking the loftiest head of the proudest potentate, with all his boasted pageantry, to the level of mortality with his meanest slave, confirmed and ratified by your unerring testimony the sacred and immortal doctrine of *Equality*.

Musing within the precincts of your inviting scenes of philosophic solitude, whither the insatiate love of true-born *Liberty* had led me, I beheld her Genius ascending, not in the spurious character and habit of a bloodthirsty fury armed with daggers and instruments of murder, and followed by a frantic and intoxicated multitude, but under the placid and chaste aspect of *Justice*, holding with a pure and unsullied hand the sacred scales, in which the actions of mortals are weighed on the brink of eternity.

O ye Tombs and emblematic images of death! how superlative is your power, how irresistible your influence! Your presence appals and chills the souls of tyrants with electric horror and remorse: the very remembrance of you haunts their minds like a ghastly spectre in the midst of their voluptuous enjoyments, and the terror you inspire, plants thorns in all their thoughts, and poisons their impious pleasures into pains. Leading a life of living death while exposed to the continual mementos of such grave but faithful monitors, the dastardly cowards endeavour to elope and steal away both from you and themselves, and to drown their reflections amid the pride and pomp of their palaces established at a remoter distance from you.*—Yea, ye Tombs! 'tis you, who punish the power-

* It was on account of the steeple of the church of St. Dennis, where the Kings of France were interred, being so visible an object from the palace of St. Germain, that *Louis the Fourteenth* could not endure to reside at this seat, though it was most admirably situated. This very circumstance induced him to build in the forests the palace of Versailles, which was eventually the ruin of his hereditary empire.

ful oppressor; 'tis you, who rest from the hands of the merciless extortioner his ill gotten pelf, and avenge the wrongs of the distressed, who have become the victims of his rapacity. 'Tis you, who humble the proud heart of the wealthy favourite of fortune by a restless brood of upstart cares and anxieties, and take ample reprisals for all the painful privations of the sons of poverty. 'Tis you, who afford a consolatory asylum to the aching bosom of the unfortunate, where affliction, with all the lingering catalogue of sighs and tears that sorrow is heir to, shall close its account. In a word, 'tis you, who give to the mind that just equipoise, that uniform degree of energy and sensibility, in which the whole wisdom and philosophy of life consist. Conscious that all human possessions are held only by an uncertain and precarious tenure and must be yielded up to you at the last, the man of reflection, rich within himself, leaves to the groveling and luxurious worldling the delusive pleasures of short-lived grandeur and useless superfluity: he makes equity the moral circumference of his actions, the horizon that bounds his every wish and every thought: yet, not forgetful of the duty he owes to society, and unwilling that the portion of life that is allotted him should become a blank, he calculates the industrious moments of his existence by their utility, and enjoys with gratitude and moderation those blessings, which the bounty of nature has bestowed upon him. 'Tis thus ye give a salutary check to the impetuosity and greedy excursions of inordinate desire: 'tis thus ye calm the feverish tumult of sensual enjoyments: 'tis thus the soul finds in you a repose from the hurricane and storm of the jarring passions: and 'tis thus ye exalt it above all sordid and paltry interests at once the torment and delight of vulgar minds, while the understanding perched on the lofty summit of your towering heights, looks around through the wide expanse of ages and of nations, and by wedding its attention to none but great and noble affections, frames to itself the most sublime and solid ideas of glory and virtue. But alas! when this fleeting dream of human existence shall be terminated, to what purpose will all this bustle of life, these impassioned agitations and emotions of the heart have conduced, if they leave behind them no traces of utility?

Once more will I revisit you ye venerable ruins! to receive your instructive lessons, and embellish my mind with your hoary truths! Once more will I resume my place among you to enjoy the sequestered privacy of your engaging and peaceful solitude: where, far secluded from the afflictive spectacle of the warring passions, I will love my own species in the affectionate feelings of recollection, and, while I am studying to advance the universal happiness of my fellow-creatures, I will build my own on the pleasing belief that I have accelerated theirs.

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THE

RUINS;

OR,

MEDITATIONS ON THE REVOLUTIONS OF EMPIRES.

CHAP. I.

THE TOUR.

IN the eleventh year of the reign of Abd-ul Hamid, son of Ahmed, emperor of the Turks; when the Nogaian Tartars were driven from the Crimea, and a Mussulman prince, of the blood of Gengis Khan, became the vassal and the *guard* of a woman, a Christian, and a queen;* I journeyed in the empire of the Ottomans, and traversed the provinces which formerly were kingdoms of Egypt and of Syria.

Directing the whole of my attention to what concerns the happiness of mankind in a state of society, I entered into cities, and studied the manners of their inhabitants; I gained admission into palaces, and observed the conduct of those who governed; I wandered over

* That is to say, in the year 1784. The reader is requested not to lose sight of this epoch. See the notes to the following pages.

the country, and examined the condition of the peasantry: and perceiving every where nothing but robbery and devastation, tyranny and wretchedness, my heart was oppressed with sorrow and indignation.

Every day I found, in my route, fields abandoned by the plough, villages deserted, and towns in ruins. Frequently I met with antique monuments, wrecks of temples, palaces, and fortifications, pillars, aqueducts, and sepulchres. By these scenes, my reflections were carried back to past ages, and my mind was absorbed in serious and profound meditation.

Arrived at Hamsa on the borders of the Orontes, and being at no great distance from the city of Palmyra, situated in the desert, I resolved to make myself personally acquainted with its boasted monuments. After three days travel in barren solitude, and having traversed a valley filled with grottos and tombs, my eyes were, on a sudden, struck, in passing from this valley into a plain, with a most astonishing scene of ruins. It consisted of a countless multitude of superb columns standing erect, and which, like the avenues of our parks, extended in regular files until the eye gradually lost sight of them. Among these columns, magnificent edifices were observable, some entire, others half mouldered away. The ground was covered on all sides with fragments of similar buildings, cornices, capitals, shafts, entablatures, and pilasters, all of white marble, and of exquisite workmanship. After a walk of three quarters of an hour along these ruins, I entered the inclosure of a vast edifice which had formerly been a temple dedicated to

the sun; and I accepted the hospitality of some poor Arabian peasants, who had established their huts in the very area of the temple. This I resolved to make my residence for some days, in order that I might examine more circumstantially into the beauty of so many stupendous works.

Every day I walked out to visit some of the monuments which bespread the plain; and one evening when lost in reflection, I had advanced as far as the *Valley of Sepulchres*, I ascended the heights that bound it, from which the eye commands at once the whole of the ruins and the immensity of the desert. The sun had just sunk below the horizon; a radiant wreath tinged with a reddish hue still marked the place of his retreat behind the distant perspective of the mountains of Syria: the full moon in the east reposing on a ground of deep blue, rose from the smooth bank of the Euphrates: the sky was cloudless; the air calm and serene; the expiring lustre of day served to soften the horror of approaching darkness; the native freshness of the evening breeze assuaged the heat of the parched earth; the herdsmen had led the camels to their stalls; the eye was not accosted by a single motion amidst the monotonous gloom of the dusky plain; through the whole desert all was solemn stillness, uninterrupted, except at intervals by the mournful sonnets of a few solitary birds of night, and the cries of a few *chacals*.* The dusk increased, and my sight could no longer distinguish through the grey twilight any thing besides the shadowy and pale apparitions of walls and columns. . . .

* An animal much resembling the fox, but less remarkable for cunning, and extremely ugly. It feeds upon dead bodies, and lives among the rocks and ruins.

The lonely solitude of the place, the peaceful serenity of the evening, and the majestic imagery of the scene, impressed my mind with religious contemplation. The view of an illustrious city deserted, the recollection of past times, the contrast with their present state, all conspired to elevate my heart with a series of sublime meditations. I sat down on the base of a broken column; and there resting my elbow on my knee, and supporting my head upon my hand, sometimes directing my eye towards the desert, sometimes fixing it on the ruins, I sunk insensibly into a profound reverie.

CHAP. II.

MEDITATIONS.

Here, said I in pensive soliloquy to myself, here an opulent city once flourished; this was the seat of a powerful empire. Yes, the interior mansions of these stately ruins, now so desert, a living multitude formerly animated, and a busy croud circulated in the streets which at present are so solitary. Within those walls, where a deadly and lonesome silence reigns, the noise of the arts and the shouts of joy and festivity continually resounded. These confused heaps of marble formed regular palaces, these fallen pillars were the majestic ornaments of temples, these antiquated and ruinous galleries are the mutilated vestiges of public places. There a numerous people assembled for the respectable performance of its religious worship, and for the feeling concerns of its bodily subsistence: there inventive in-

dustry, the fruitful source of enjoyments, solicited the riches of every climate ; and the purple of Tyre was commercially exchanged for the precious thread of Serica ; the soft tissues of Cassimere for the sumptuous carpets of Lydia; the amber of the Baltic for the pearls and perfumes of Arabia; the gold of Ophir for the pewter of Thule.*

And now what remains are there still subsisting of this opulent and powerful city, but a doleful skeleton ! What evidence of its vast empire, but an obsolete and obscure remembrance ! To the bustling throng which crowded under these porticos, a death-like solitude has succeeded. The silence of the tomb is substituted for the buz of public places of resort. The opulence of a commercial city is metamorphosed into hideous poverty. The palaces of kings are become the haunt and receptacle of deer ; the threshold of temples is converted into a fold for the flocks ; and unclean reptiles inhabit the sanctuaries of the gods. Ah ! how has so much glory become eclipsed ! How has so much art and workmanship become annihilated ! Thus, thus perish the labours of men ! Thus nations and empires transiently pass away !

The history of times past strongly revived and crowded upon my thoughts. I called to mind those

* *The precious thread of Serica.* That is the silk originally derived from the mountainous country where the *great wall* terminates; and which appears to have been the cradle of the Chinese empire. . . . *The soft tissues of Cassimere.* The shawls which Ezekiel seems to have described under the appellation of Choud-choud. *The Gold of Ophir.* This country, which was one of the twelve Arab cantons, and which has so much and so unsuccessfully been sought for by the antiquaries, has left however some trace of itself in Ofor, in the province of Oman ; upon the Persian Gulph, neighbouring on one side to the Sabeans, who are celebrated by Strabo for their plenty of gold, and on the other to Aula or Hevila, where the Pearl fishery was carried on. See the 27th chapter of Ezekiel, which gives a very curious and extensive picture of the commerce of Asia at that period.

distant ages, when twenty celebrated nations inhabited the country around me. I pictured to myself the Assyrian on the banks of the Tygris, the Chaldean on those of the Euphrates, and the Persian whose power extended from the Indus to the Mediterranean. I enumerated the kingdoms of Damascus and Idumea; of Jerusalem and Samaria; and the warlike states of the Philistines; and the commercial republics of Phenicia. This very Syria, said I to myself, now almost depopulated, contained at that period, a hundred flourishing cities, and abounded with towns, villages and hamlets.* Every where one might have seen cultivated fields, frequented roads, and crowded habitations. Ah! what are become of those ages of abundance, vitality, and population? What are become of so many brilliant productions of the hand of man? Where are those ramparts of Nineveh, those walls of Babylon, those palaces of Persepolis, those temples of Balbec and of Jerusalem? Where are those fleets of Tyre, those dock-yards of Arad, those work-shops of Sidon, and that multitude of mariners, pilots, merchants, and soldiers? Where those husbandmen, those harvests, those flocks and cattle, with all that creative race of living beings, in which the luxuriant surface of the earth seemed to pride itself? Alas! I have traversed this desolate country, I have visited the places, that were once the theatre of so much splendour, but I have met with nothing but desertion and solitude! I have looked for those

* *This Syria contained at that period a hundred flourishing cities.* According to Josephus and Strabo, there were in Syria twelve millions of souls; and the traces that remain of culture and habitation confirm the calculation.

ancient people and their masterly works, but all I have found is no more than a faint trace of them, analogous to that which the foot of a passenger leaves on the sand. The temples are overthrown, the palaces demolished, the ports filled up, the towns destroyed, and the earth, stript of inhabitants, resembles a dreary burying-place. —Great God! from whence proceed such destructive and melancholy revolutions? Whence comes it, that the fortune of these countries is so strikingly changed? Why are so many cities destroyed? And by what fatality is that pristine population prevented from being re-produced and perpetuated?

Thus, absorbed in contemplation, an incessant torrent of new reflections poured in upon my mind. Every thing, continued I, misleads my judgment, and agitates my heart with pain and uncertainty. When these countries enjoyed what constitutes the glory and felicity of mankind, they were an *unbelieving* people who inhabited them: it was the Phenician, offering human sacrifices to Moloch, who brought together within his walls the riches of every climate; it was the Chaldean, prostrating himself before a serpent*, who subjugated opulent cities, ravaged and laid waste the palaces of kings and the temples of the Gods; it was the Persian, the worshipper of fire, who collected tribute from a hundred nations; they were the inhabitants of this very city, adorers of the sun and stars, who erected so many monuments of affluence and luxury. Fertile fields, numerous flocks, abundant harvests, every thing that ought to have been the reward of *piety*, was in the hands of these *idolaters*; and now, when a *believing*

* The Dragon Bel.

and *holy* people occupies the same countries, nothing is to be seen but solitude and sterility. The earth under these *hallowed* hands yields only briar and worm wood. Man sows in anguish, and the produce he reaps is sorrow and disquietude. War, famine and pestilence, by turns assail him. Yet, are not these the children of the prophets? This Christian, this Mussulman, this Jew, are they not the elect of Heaven, loaded with gifts of grace and miracles? Why then is this race, so divinely privileged, deprived of those favours which were formerly showered down upon the Heathen? Why are these lands, consecrated by the blood of the martyrs, now destitute of those blessings, which their ancient inhabitants enjoyed? Why have they been banished, as it were, and transferred for so many ages to other nations and climates?

And here, pursuing the course of vicissitudes, which have by turns transmitted the sceptre of the world to nations so different in manners and religion, from those of ancient Asia down to the more recent ones of *Europe*, this general term, by retrospective allusion to my native country, awakened in my breast the warm feeling of nationality; and, transporting my attention to my natal soil, all my thoughts locally centered on its situation at the time I left it.*

My memory represented to me its highly cultivated lands, its roads so admirably executed, its towns inhabited by an immense multitude, its ships scattered over every part of the ocean, its ports filled with the produce of both the Indies; and, comparing the activity of its commerce, the extent of its navigation, the rich-

* In the year 1782, at the close of the American war.

ness of its buildings, the arts and industry of its inhabitants, with all that Egypt and Syria could formerly boast of a similar kind, I amused myself with the idea, that I had rediscovered in modern Europe the past splendour of Asia; but the charm of my pleasing reverie was presently blasted and dissolved by the last step in the comparison. For, reflecting, that the very identical places before me had once exhibited a picture of activity not less animated: who, said I to myself, can assure me, that the desolation I now witness will not one day be the lot of the nations in our own hemisphere? Who knows, but that hereafter some traveller, like myself, will sit down upon the banks of the Seine, the Thames, or the Zuyder sea, where now, amid the vortex of so many enjoyments, the heart and the eyes are not sufficiently capacious to take in the multitude of sensations that press for admittance; who knows, but he will one day sit down upon mute and solitary ruins, and weep over the ashes of the people, and the memorable records of their departed greatness?

The very thought shot tears into my eyes; and, covering my head with the skirt of my mantle, I lapsed into the most gloomy meditations on human affairs. Ah! said I, in the midst of my sorrow, man is born to be unhappy! a blind fatality sports with his destiny!* a merciless and cruel necessity governs by capricious chance the devoted lot of mortals! No, I am wrong: it is the decrees of divine justice, that are now accomplishing! A mysterious God is exercising his incom-

* *A blind fatality.* An universal and rooted prejudice of the East, "It was written," is there the answer to every thing. Hence result an unconcern and apathy, the most powerful impediments to instruction and civilization.

prehensible judgments! doubtless, he has pronounced a secret malediction against this region of the earth; he has inflicted a curse upon the present race of people to avenge himself of past generations. Ah! who shall dare to fathom the inscrutable depths of the Divinity?

And, here my senses sunk into a motionless stupor, drowned in the tide of profound melancholy.

CHAP. III.

THE APPARITION.

Soon after a noise struck my ear, somewhat like to the agitation of a flowing robe, and the slow march of a foot upon the dry and rustling glass. Startled and alarmed, I gently raised my mantle; and stealing from beneath a timid glance around me, suddenly on the left, amid the obscure glimmerings of the moon, through the columns and ruins of an adjacent temple, methought I saw a pale apparition, enveloped in an immense drapery, such as spectres are painted issuing out of tombs. I shuddered; and, in this tumultuous state of frightful agitation, was hesitating whether to fly, or to assure myself of its reality, when a hollow voice, in a grave and solemn accent, thus addressed me:

"How long will the importunity of man assail heaven with unjust complaints? How long will he vent his idle and clamorous accusations against Fate, the presumptive author of his calamities? Will he never open his eyes to the light, and his heart to the suggestions of

truth and reason! Truth, which every where presents itself to his senses with the most inviting effulgence, and yet he does not see it! Reason, whose voice continually resounds in his ear; and yet his understanding does not hear it! Unjust and thoughtless man! if thou canst only for a moment suspend the delusion, which fascinates thy senses; if thy heart be capable of comprehending the language and arguments of unsophisticated eloquence, interrogate these ruins! listen to the silent lessons which they read to thy reason! . . And you, ye sacred temples! ye venerable tombs! ye walls once so proud and glorious, that have been the witnesses of twenty different ages, appear in the injured cause of nature herself! give your attendance at the bar of an upright and sound understanding, and bear testimony before this tribunal, against a most unwarrantable and unjust accusation! confound the declamatory sorceries of false wisdom and hypocritical piety, and avenge heaven and earth of man, their calumniator!"

What is this blind fatality, that capriciously sports, without rule and laws, with the lot of mortals? What this unjust, this merciless and cruel necessity, which frustrates and confounds the issue of actions, both of prudence and of folly? Wherein consist the maledictions and denunciations of Heaven against these countries? Where are we to look for the credentials of the actual existence of that *divine* curse, which perpetuates this scene of depopulation and local desolation? Speak, ye monumental witnesses of past ages! say, has Heaven changed its laws, and the earth its course? Has the sun extinguished his fire diffused through the regions of space? Do the seas no longer send forth

their clouds? Are the rain and the dew steadfastly fixed in the air? Do the mountains withhold the water of their springs? Are the rivers dried up? and do trees and vegetables no longer bear fruit and seed? Answer these queries, thou race of falsehood and iniquity; has God disturbed that primitive and settled order, which he himself originally assigned to nature? Has heaven denied to the earth, and the earth to its inhabitants, the blessings which they heretofore dispensed? If the creatian goes on upon the same principles as before, if they have the same powers and means within their reach now that they had formerly, whence comes it that the present race is not distinguished by the same traits of character and fortune with their ancestors? Ah! how falsely do you accuse Fate and Divinity! How wrongfully do you make God the cause of your evils. Tell me, ye perverse and hypocritical race, if these places be desolate, if populous and powerful cities be reduced to absolute solitude, is it God that has occasioned their ruin? Is it his hand that has thrown down these walls, sapped these temples, and mutilated these pillars? or, is it the hand of man? Is it the arm of God, that has carried the sword into the city, and set fire to the country around, that has murdered the people, burned their crops, rooted up the timber, and ravaged the pastures? or, is it the arm of man? And when a famine has been the result of this devastation and waste of produce, is it the vengeance of God that has sent it, or the senseless intoxication and frantic fury of man? When, under the pressure of such a famine, the people have lived upon unwholesome provision, and a pestilence has ensued, is this affliction

to be imputed to the wrath of Heaven, or to human imprudence? When war, famine, and pestilence united, have, by a torrent of evils, swept away the inhabitants, and the land has become a desert, is it God who has depopulated it? Is it his rapacity, that plunders the labourer, ravages the fruitful fields, and desolates the country? or, is it the rapacity of those who govern? Is it his pride, that creates murderous wars? or, is it the pride of kings and their ministers? Is it the venality of his decisions that blasts the fortune of families? or, is it the venality of those who are the personal organs of the laws? Are they, again, his passions, that, under a thousand forms, torment individuals and nations? or, are they the passions of men? And, if in the anguish of their misfortunes, they are too blind of understanding to see the proper remedies, is it the ignorance of God that is to be impeached? or, is it their own ignorance? Away then ye fretful mortals, away with your noisy accusations against both the decrees of Fate and the judgments of Heaven! If God be good, will he make himself instrumental to your punishment? If he be just, will he be the accomplice of your crimes? No, no; the caprice and inconstancy, of which man so loudly complains, is not the caprice and inconstancy of fate and predestination: the darkness, in which his reason strays, is not the darkness of God; the source of his calamities is not seated in the distant heavens, but very near to him upon the earth; it is not concealed in the latent bosom of the Divinity; it resides in man himself, he carries it with him in the inward recesses of his own heart. But, thou murmurest and sayest: Why have an *unbelieving* people enjoyed the

blessings of heaven and of earth? Why is a *holy* and *chosen* race less fortunate than an impious race of *infidels?* Deluded man! where lies the contradiction at which thou takest umbrage and offence?—Where the enigmatical inconsistency, in which thou supposest the justice of God to be involved? Take the scales in which mercy and judgment, causes and effects, are weighed, into thine own hand, and then tell me—When these infidels thou alludest to attentively observed the laws of the heavens and the earth, when they regulated their intelligent and industrious labours by the order of the seasons and the course of the stars, ought God to have disturbed the equilibrium of the world for the purpose of defeating their prudence? When they cultivated, by the toil and sweat of their own brow, the face of the surrounding country, ought he to have interrupted the fall of rain, to have withheld the fertilizing dews, and to have caused thorns to spring up every where upon it? When, in order to render this parched and barren soil more fertile and productive, they had, by dint of their own assiduity and perseverance, constructed aqueducts, cut canals, and carried the distant waters across the deserts, ought he to have dried up the springs in the mountains? Ought he to have blighted the harvests, which art had so abundantly promoted? Ought he to have desolated a country by war, that had been peopled by peace? Ought he to have demolished the towns which entirely flourished by the encouragement of industry? In a word, Ought he to have confounded and subverted what the brightest wisdom of man had been so sedulously employed in establishing? And, what species of *infidelity* is that, let me ask, which

founded empires by prudence, defended them by courage, and strengthened them by justice ; which raised magnificent cities, formed large seaports, drained unwholesome marshes, covered the ocean with ships, the earth with inhabitants, and, like the creative spirit, diffused life and motion through the globe ? If such be characteristic of *faithless impiety*, what is *true belief* ? Does *holiness* consist in acts of destruction ? Is then that God, which peoples the air with birds, the earth with animals, and the waters with their finny inhabitants ; Is that God, which animates universal nature, a God that delights in ruins and monuments of death ? Does he require devastation for homage, and conflagration for sacrifice ? Does he demand of his votaries expiring groans for hymns, desperadoes and murderers for his worshippers, and a ravaged and desert world for his temple ? Yet, ye *holy* and *faithful* generation of *believers*, what are your *pious* works ? What are the fruits of your *godliness* ? Ye have massacred the people, burnt and reduced their cities to ashes, destroyed every species of cultivation, and made the earth itself a perfect wilderness ; and ye demand too the reward of your labours ! Ye must indeed perform miracle ! Ye must raise from the dead the peasantry that ye have so savagely murdered ; ye must cause the walls, that ye have so wantonly demolished, to rise again ; ye must make the flourishing harvests which ye have laid waste, to re-appear ; ye must collect afresh the water into conduits, that has been uselessly diverted and squandered away ; ye must counteract the laws of heaven and earth, supersede the whole system which God has established for the display of his greatness and magnifi-

cence, repeal that eternal code of laws, anterior to every other and to all the prophets; annul those immutable principles, and that fixed order of things, which can never, in their present state, alter the progress of the passions, nor the ignorance of man. But, the victim of passion who is a stranger to these laws, the child of ignorance who observes no cause, and who foresees no effect, have said in the foolishness of their hearts: "Every thing proceeds from the womb of chance; a blind fatality distributes good and evil upon the earth; nor is prudence nor wisdom itself able to withstand its sovereign influence." Or else, changing their language, and assuming the tone of hypocrisy, they have exclaimed: "Every thing proceeds from God himself; who delights in deceiving the wisdom of the sage, and in confounding the reason and judgment of the learned." And ignorance hath applauded herself in her own malignity; and, hath said, "Thus will I cope with science, which is a vulture to my soul: thus will I render inefficient and abortive, the prying investigations of useful policy and genius, which are an eye-sore to my sight, and a dagger to my ear:" And ambition, waking from her dreams of rapine, and stretching forth her greedy hand, sternly rejoined: "I too, by dint of the same dogma, will oppress and domineer over the weak; and will thus devour the fruit of his labour: and I will say,—*It is God that hath decreed it, it is fate, that hath willed and predestinated it.*" But, mark me, for I swear by all the laws of heaven and earth, and by those which governs the human heart, the hypocrite shall fall by his own hypocrisy, and the deceiver by his own deceit, and rapacity itself shall whet a

sword for his own destruction. But, sooner shall the sun change his course, and light turn to darkness, than folly shall prevail over wisdom and genuine science; sooner shall the planets start from their orbits, than the intrigues of blindfold stupidity and growling bigotry shall trample upon the sacred principles of heaven-born reason, and enlightened policy, or dethrone and banish them from their station in the exercise of that virtuous and profound art of securing to man the birth-right of his own natural enjoyments, and of establishing in his own heart the empire of his happiness on the solid basis of sympathetic feeling and reciprocal justice.

CHAP. IV.

PREPARATORY EXPOSITION.

Thus spoke the Apparition. Awed and electrified by this discourse, my heart was agitated by a multitude of reflections, and I remained for some time silent. At length emboldening myself, I summoned courage, and thus addressed him: "Oh! thou Genius of tombs and ruins! thy presence and air of austerity have thrown my senses into disorder, but the justness of thy observations give confidence to my soul. Excuse my ignorance. Alas! if man be blind, can that which constitutes his pain and suffering, be also his crime! The voice of reason was indeed a stranger to my ear; but the moment it was properly made known to me, I gave it a welcome reception. Yes, if my heart be legible to thee, thou well knowest how much it courts and pants

after truth, how sincerely and passionately it palpitates in quest of it: and, was it not for this that thou now beholdest me in this retired spot? Alas! I have wandered over the country, I have visited the towns and all the territory around; and finding every where the sight of misery and desolation, the striking sentimental picture of the evils which distress my fellow-creatures, deeply afflicted my mind! and I asked myself with a sigh: Is man, then, created to be the victim of pain and anguish? I was, therefore, induced to meditate upon human calamities, that I might detect some remedy: and I said, I will separate myself from corrupt societies; I will remove at a distance from luxurious palaces, where the soul grows depraved by satiety, and from the lowly cottage, where it sinks and is abased by indigence and penury. I will go and dwell in solitude amidst the ruins of cities: I will inquire of the monuments of antiquity, what was the wisdom of former ages: I will awaken and call forth from the dormitory of sepulchres, the spirit that once gave animation and splendour to the states of Asia, and glory to the people: I will ask the ashes of legislators what causes have operated in the rise and downfall of empires; what are the constituent principles of national prosperity and misfortune; what the genuine maxims, upon which the peace of society and the happiness of man ought to be founded."

I paused; and, with my eyes fixed on the ground, I waited the reply of the Genius. "Peace and happiness, said he, celestially descend upon him, who practiseth justice! Yes, young man! since thy heart courteth and aspireth after truth with honest sincerity;

since thou canst distinguish her form through the dark mist of prejudices which blindfold the sight, thy inquiry shall not be fruitless; for, I will lay open to thy view the nature of that truth, for which thou art so chaste a candidate: I will visually unfold to thy intuitive reason the knowledge which thou so virtuously covetest, and will shed in thy mind the luminous and hoary wisdom, that lies buried and recorded in these tombs, and the science of ages."—When, instantly approaching me, he stretched forth his hand, and touching my head, "Rise, mortal, said he, and disengage thyself from that corporeal mass of earth with which thy grovelling senses are incumbered." Quick as the electric shock, a celestial fire darted through my whole frame, and the ties which bind us to the earth, seemed suddenly dissolved: when, borne on the pinions of the Genius, I felt myself, like a light ethereal vapour, transported into the regions above.—There, from the highest part of the aerial expanse, casting a look towards the inferior earth, I beheld a spectacle that was strikingly novel. Under my feet, floating in space, a globe similar to that of the moon, but less in magnitude and lustre, presented to me one of its phases, which had the appearance of a disk variegated with spots, some of them whitish and nebulous, others brown, green, and grey; and, whilst I was exerting my utmost efforts in surveying and discriminating these spots:—"Tell me, thou disciple of truth, said the Genius, hast thou any recollection of the objects before thee?" Addressing the Genius, I observed in reply, "If I did not perceive the moon in another quarter, I should suppose the orb below me to be that planet; for, it seems

to resemble the aspect of the moon when viewed through a telescope in the dusk of an eclipse; one should rather apprehend the variegated spots are seas and continents."

"True, said he, they are the very seas and continents of the hemisphere, of which thou hast been an inhabitant."

"What! exclaimed I, is that actually the Earth, that is inhabited by human beings?"

"The very same, replied he: That brownish space which occupies, irregularly, a considerable portion of the disk, and nearly surrounds it on all sides, is what you call the *main ocean*, which, from the south pole advancing towards the equator, first forms the great gulf of *India* and *Africa*, then stretches to the east across the *Malay Islands*, as far as the confines of *Tartary*, while at the west it incloses the continents of *Africa* and of *Europe*, reaching to the north of *Asia*.

"Under our feet thou wilt observe a peninsula of a square figure, which is the desert country of *Arabia*; and, on the left, that great continent, which is nearly as naked and barren as the other in its interior parts, and only verdant as it approaches the sea, is the parched soil, inhabited by a sable-complexioned people of the *negro race*.* To the north, and on the other side of an irregular and long-necked narrow sea,† thou mayest perceive the territorial tracts of *Europe*, rich in the fertility of its pastures, meadows, and cultivated lands. To the right, from the Caspian Sea, extend the sterile and snow-decked plains of *Tartary*. As the eye reverts towards us, it may discern a large whitish space,

* Africa. † The Mediterranean.

which is the dismal and vast *desert of Cobi*, separating the empire of *China* from the rest of the world. The dominion of *China* is situated in that furrowed extent of ground, which seems, by an oblique projection, to escape from the view. Bordering on this, are those detached slips and scattered points of land, which form the peninsula, and islands of the *Malayans*, the unfortunate proprietors of spices and perfumes. The triangular section there, which projects so considerably into the sea, is that but too much famed peninsula of *India*.* You see the crooked windings of the *Ganges*, the rugged mountains of *Thibet*, the fortunate valley of *Cassimere*, the briny deserts of *Persia*, the banks of the *Euphrates* and the *Tigris*, the rough bed of the *Jordan* and the streams and canals of the solitary *Nile*."

"O Genius, said I, interrupting him, the organs of vision in a mortal being in vain attempt to discriminate objects at so immense a distance." Scarcely had the words quitted my lips, when, by a sudden touch, he rendered my eyes more acute and piercing than those of the eagle; and yet the rivers even still appeared to me no more than the meanderings of so many floating ribbons, the mountains no more than so many slight ridges or irregular furrows, and the largest cities so puny, that they looked, if I may use the comparison, somewhat like to the small compartments in a chessboard.

And the Genius, resuming the subject, with his pointed finger, marked out to me the different objects indi-

* Of what real good has been the commerce of India to the mass of the people? On the contrary, how great the evil occasioned by the superstition of this country having been added to the general superstition?

ciples of science and of the arts, at a period when all others lived in an uncivilized state of barbarism; it was there that a race, (now regarded as the refuse and outcast of society, because forsooth their *hair* is naturally *frizzled* and *wooly*, and their *skin black*,) studied the laws and phenomena of nature, and borrowed from thence the archetype and model of those civil and religious systems, which still obtain, with some variation, in every nation of the globe. A little lower, the greyish spots that thou mayest observe, are the *pyramids*, whose ponderous masses must heretofore have overawed thy senses with stupendous wonder and astonishment, when on the spot. Farther on the coast that thou beholdest bounded by the sea on the one side, and by a ridge of narrow mountains on the other, was the site and abode of the Phenician nations; there stood the powerful cities of *Tyre*, *Sidon*, *Ascalon*, *Gaza*, and *Berytus*. This river, that seems to have no issue or outlet, by which it discharges itself is the Jordan; and those barren and dry rocks were formerly the theatre of events, which have embraced the whole world in their consequences. Here are seen the desert of *Horeb*, and mount *Sinai*, where, by means of which the vulgar are universally ignorant, a profound and enterprising character laid the foundation of institutions, whose influence has been felt by the whole human race. Upon the barren tract of land on the confines of this desert, there no longer exists any perceptible trace of splendour; and yet this was formerly the seat of commercial affluence. Here were the ports of the Idumeans,*

* Ailah (Eloth) and Arsiam-Gaber (Hesion-Gaber.) The name of the first of these towns still subsists in its ruins, at the point of the gulph of the Red Sea, and in the route which the pilgrims take to Mecca. Hesion has at

from whence the fleets of the Phenicians and the Jews, coasting along the peninsula of Arabia sailed to the Persian gulf, in order to take in lading, and to import from thence the pearls of Hevila, and the gold of Saba and of Ophir. Yes, it was here, on the coast of Oman and Bahrain, that the emporium of this luxurious species of commerce was fixed, which, as it removed and was transferred by mercantile revolutions from one

present no trace, any more than Quolzoum and Faran : it was, however, the harbour for the fleets of Solomon. The vessels of this prince, conducted by the Tyrians, sailed along the coast of Arabia to Ophir in the Persian Gulph, thus opening a communication with the merchants of India and Ceylon. That this navigation was entirely of Tyrian invention, as appears both from the pilots and ship-builders employed by the Jews, and the names that were given to the trading islands, viz. Tyrus and Aradus, now Barbain. The voyage was performed in two different modes, either in canoes of osier and rushes, covered on the outside with skins done over with pitch : these vessels were unable to quit the Red Sea, or so much as to leave the shore. The second mode of carrying on the trade was by means of vessels, with decks of the size of our long boats, which were able to pass the strait and to weather the dangers of the ocean ; but for this purpose it was necessary to bring the wood from Mount Lebanus and Cilicia, where it is very fine and in great abundance. This wood was first conveyed in floats from Tarsus to Phenicia, for which reason the vessels were called ships of Tarsus ; from whence it has been ridiculously inferred that they went round the promontory of Africa as far as Tortosa in Spain. From Phœnicia it was transported on the backs of camels to the Red Sea, which practice still continues, because the shores of this sea are absolutely unprovided with wood even for fuel. These vessels spent a complete year in their voyage, that is, sailed one year, sojourned another, and did not return till the third. This tediousness was owing, first to their cruising from port to port, as they do at present ; secondly to their being detained by the Monsoon currents ; and thirdly because, according to the calculations of Pliny and Strabo, it was the ordinary practice among the ancients to spend three years in a voyage of twelve hundred leagues. Such a commerce must have been very expensive, particularly as they were obliged to carry with them their provisions and even fresh water. For this reason Solomon made himself master of Palmyra, which was at that time inhabited, and was already the magazine and high road of merchants by the way of Euphrates. This conquest brought Solomon much nearer to the country of gold and pearls. This alternative of a route either by the Red Sea or the river Euphrates was to the ancients, what in later times has been the alternative in a voyage to the Indies, either by crossing the Isthmus of Suez, or doubling the Cape of Good Hope. It appears that till the time of Moses this trade was carried on across the desert of Syria and Thesis ; that afterwards it fell into the hands of the Phœnicians, who fixed its site upon the Red Sea, and that it was mutual jealousy that induced the kings of Nineveh and Babylon to undertake the destruction of Tyre and Jerusalem. I insist the more upon these facts, because I have never seen any thing reasonable upon the subject.

country to another, became the critical die, by the cast of which the fate of ancient nations was decided. Hither were brought the spices and precious stones of Ceylon, the shawls of Cassimere, the diamonds of Golconda, the amber of the Maldives, the musk of Thibet, the aloes of Cochin, the monkeys and the peacocks of the continent of India, the incense of Hadramut, the myrrh, the silver, the gold-dust, and the ivory of Africa. From hence valuable cargoes of these commodities were exported, sometimes by the route of the red Sea, in Egyptian and Syrian bottoms, which successively contributed to nourish the opulence of Thebes, of Sidon, of Memphis, and of Jerusalem; and again, sometimes by taking the course of the Tigris and the Euphrates, the same articles of merchandise tended to awaken the activity of the Assyrians, the Medes, the Chaldeans, and the Persians, and, according as the riches, which they introduced, were used or abused, they became alternately a pillar of support, or an engine of destruction to their power. Radiating from this centre of agrandisement, the magnificence of *Persepolis*, acquired its collective dimensions and growth, of which thou mayest observe the mouldering columns; as did that also of *Ecbatana*, whose seven-fold walls that once inclosed it, are now levelled with the dust; and of *Babylon*, the relics of which are at present no more than a few confused heaps of earth;* likewise of *Nineveh*, whose name, at this day, is hardly recognised; as well as that

* It appears that Babylon occupied on the eastern bank of the Euphrates a space of ground six leagues in length. Throughout this space bricks are found, by means of which, daily additions are made to the town of Helle. Upon many of these are characters written with a nail similar to those of Persepolis. I am indebted for these facts to M. de Beauchamp, grand vicar of Babylon, a traveller equally distinguished for his knowledge of astronomy and veracity.

of *Thapsacus*, of *Anatho*, of *Gerra*, and of the desolate and memorable *Palmyra*. Oh! ye names for ever glorious! ye celebrated scenes! ye renowned countries! how replete is your modern aspect with sublime instruction! How many profound truths are there written on the surface of that precious spot of earth! Bear me, ye powers of memory, through the eventful history of past times! and, ye places that have witnessed the life and progression of man in the circle of so many different ages, aid my recollection, while I endeavour to trace the revolutionary vicissitudes of his fortune! Develope the impulsive motives that actuated and interested his conduct on these important occasions, and measure the force and extent of its consequences through all the miscellaneous series of his public transactions! Disclose the genuine sources, from whence he derived his success and his disgrace! Call forth his understanding to the knowledge of those causes, from which his misfortunes radically spring! shew him by the map of his own errors, the way to reform! Teach and demonstrate to him the advantage and dignity of his own proper self-wisdom! Hold up the mirror of past generations for his inspection; and, from the lives and experience of those of his species who have gone before him, let him collect the constituent features of his own personal happiness, and bequeath the picture, as an instructive legacy, to posterity!"

CHAP. V.

CONDITION OF MAN IN THE UNIVERSE.

THE Genius paused; and, after a few moments of silence, thus resumed his discourse:—"I have already observed to thee, thou friend of truth! that it is in vain for man to attribute his misfortunes to *obscure and imaginary agents*, and to derive his evils from the operation of *mysterious causes*, which have no concern in their production. In the general order of the universe, his condition is doubtless subjected to a number of inconveniences, and his existence too over-ruled by *superior powers*; but these powers are neither the decrees of a blind destiny, nor the caprices of whimsical and fantastic beings. Man, like the world of which he forms a part, is governed by *natural laws*, regular in their operation, unerring in their effects, immutable in their essence; and these laws, *the universal source of good and evil*, are neither written in the distant stars, nor concealed in mysterious codes; inherent in the very nature of all terrestial beings, identified by their existence, they are at all times and in all places present to the mind of man; they act upon his senses, suggest themselves to his intellect, and annex to every action its correspondent punishment and reward. Let man study these laws, *let him understand his own nature, and the nature of the beings that surround him*, and he will soon discover the agents, by which his destiny is regulated, and the causes of his afflictions with their appropriate remedies.

"When the *secret power* that *animates the universe*, formed this habitable globe, it stamped on the beings which compose it *certain properties essential to each*, which became their distinctive *rule* of action, the bond of their reciprocal connections, and the cause of harmony collectively in the whole. Thus, it established a regular order of causes and effects, of principles and consequences, which, *under the appearance of accident or chance*, governs the universe, and maintains the equilibrium of the world. Hence it gave to fire motion and activity; to air elasticity; to matter weight and density; it made air lighter than water, metals heavier than earth, wood less cohesive than steel; it ordained the flame to ascend, the stone to fall, and the plant to vegetate;—to man,—whom it formed to encounter the action and impulse of so many different beings upon him, with the wish at the same time of preserving his frail existence, it gave the property of sensibility. By this faculty, every action prejudicial to his existence gave him an impression of *pain* and of *evil*; and every one favourable to its preservation, an impression of *pleasure* and of *good*. By these impressions, sometimes led to shun what is offensive to his senses, and sometimes attracted towards the objects that sooth and gratify them, man became absolutely *necessitated to love and preserve his existence*. Self-preservation, *the desire of personal happiness*, and an *aversion to pain*, are the essential and primary laws that Nature herself creatively imposed upon man, and which the ruling power, whatever it be, has established to direct and govern him; and these laws, like those of motion in the *physical* world, are the simple and generative principle of every thing that takes place in the *moral* world."

Such then is the condition of man: in one view, subjected to the action of the elements around him, he becomes exposed to a variety of inevitable evils; and, if, in this part of her decree, Nature should appear severe, but in other respects just and even indulgent, she has, in another view, not only attempered those evils with proportionable blessings, but has, moreover, given him the power of augmenting the one and diminishing the other; and seems to have said to him,—"Frail work of mine own hands, I owe thee nothing, and I give thee life. The world, in which I place thee, was not made for thee, and yet I grant thee the use of it. Thou shalt find it a mixture of good and evil—but it rests with thyself alone to distinguish the one from the other; the path is interspersed with flowers and thorns,—choose thy own course. Thou hast the free and sovereign disposal of thy own lot; I commit the whole of thy destiny to thy sole discretion."——"Yes," continued the Genius, "man is become the ruler and self-conductor of his own fate; it is he himself, that has been the creator of all his various successes and disappointments; and though, on looking back upon the sorrows with which he has been tormenting his life, he should have reason to lament his own personal weakness and folly; yet, when he comes coolly to consider, with what principles he first set out, and to what a degree of elevation they were capable of exalting him, he will probably find much greater cause to pique himself upon his own powers, and to feel contentedly proud in his appropriate portion of natural endowments."

CHAP VI.

ORIGINAL STATE OF MAN.

MAN at his first origin, being, by his natural formation, naked both in body and mind, found himself thrown by accident, upon a wild and desert earth. An orphan, abandoned by the unknown power that had produced him, he saw no supernatural beings or celestial visitors at hand, that were come to advertise him of *wants* which he owed merely to his senses, or to inform him of *duties*, originating solely from those wants. Like other animals, possessing no experience of the past, no anticipation of the future, he wandered in the midst of forests, guided and governed simply by his natural affections. By the *pain* of *hunger* he was directed to the search of food, and hence he began to provide for his own subsistence ; by the inclemencies of the weather he was excited to cover his body, and he accordingly made himself clothing ; by the attractive invitation of a potent pleasure, he approached a fellow being, and perpetuated his species.

Thus, the *impressions* he received from all ranks of surrounding objects, rousing his *faculties* to action, developed by degrees the powers of his understanding, and began to remove his profound ignorance. His wants called forth his industry ; the perils he ran laid the foundation of his courage : he learned to distinguish the wholesome from the noxious class of plants, to resist and get the victory over the elements, to seize upon his prey, and to defend his life from the danger of at-

task ; and, by this means, alleviated a great portion of his misery.

Thus *self-preservation, aversion to pain, and the desire of personal happiness*, were the simple and cogent motives, which brought man forth from the savage and barbarous state, in which Nature had placed him ; and now that his life is sown with all its various seeds of enjoyment, and he can count every day of it by the comforts it affords, he may justly applaud himself, and triumphantly exclaim, without incurring the censure of egotism : " It is my own self that have produced the blessings which surround me : I myself am the inventor and operator of my own felicity ; secure habitations, commodious raiment, abundant and wholesome provision, smiling valleys, fertile hills, populous empires, ye are all the works of my own hands ; and, but for me, the earth had been left in wild disorder, and would now have been no better than an undrained swamp, a rude forest, and a dreary desert !" " Well spoken, *man-creator !*" continued the Genius, "accept the tribute of my homage ! 'Tis thou, that hast measured the bounds of the heavens, and computed the magnitude of the stars ; 'tis thou, that hast drawn the electric lightning from the clouds, extended thy power over the fury of the sea and the tempest, and made the whole of the elements subservient to thy authority ! But, ah ! how is it, that so many sublime efforts of human genius are so woefully jumbled and intermixed with errors ?"

CHAP. VII.

PRINCIPLES OF SOCIETY.

Now, the first human beings, in the capacity of hunters and fishermen, ranging the woods and borders of rivers in pursuit of game and fish, and seeing themselves almost perpetually beset with dangers, assailed by enemies, tormented by hunger, by reptiles and wild beasts, began to feel, individually, their own weakness in this unconnected and detached state; and, impelled by a common want and desire of security, and by a reciprocity of sensation and sentiment relative to the evils under which they severally suffered, they united their separate abilities and corporeal strength. Accordingly, when one man chanced to be exposed to danger, a number of the rest assisted and defended him; when one wanted or fell short of provision, another shared with him his prey. Thus, men associated together for the mutual safety of their persons, for the augmentation of their powers, and for the protection of their possessive enjoyments; and *love of self* thus became the origin and foundation of society.

Afterwards, instructed by the repeated experience of a multiplicity of accidents, by the fatigues of a vagrant and unsettled life, and by the painful anxiety resulting from frequent scarcity, men began to reason with themselves, and said: "Why should we consume our days in search of the scattered fruits which a parsimonious soil affords? Why weary and perplex ourselves in the precarious and doubtful pursuit of prey, that is constantly escaping us both in the woods and

the water? Why not assemble under our own care and inspection the animals that we now live upon, and apply our time and attention to the increase and defence of them? They will afford us a supply of food, we can clothe ourselves with their skins, and we shall thereby live exempt from the fatigues of the day, and the solicitude for the morrow." Accordingly, one aiding another, they seized the nimble kid and the timid sheep; they tamed the patient camel, the furious bull, and the impetuous horse; and, congratulating themselves on the success of their confederate industry, they sat down in the joy of their own hearts, and began to taste the comforts of repose and uniform tranquility; and thus *love of self*, the great cause of all their reasoning, became the institutor and founder of every art and every enjoyment.

At this period of human society, when men could pass their days in more perfect ease and leisure, and in the communication and comparison of their ideas, gradual curiosity and reflection led them to extend their thoughts and researches into both terrestrial and celestial objects, and into the nature of those things which seemed connected with their own existence. They observed the course of the seasons, the action of the elements, and the properties of fruits and plants; and, by this means, endeavoured to multiply the number of their enjoyments. Remarking, in certain districts, that particular seeds contained a very wholesome substance in a small bulk, easy to be transported and preserved, and possessed of the faculty of re-producing the parent plant, they determined to imitate this process of Nature; and therefore, with that view, committed to the

earth barley, wheat, and rice ; and the produce afterwards abundantly answered their expectation. Thus, they found the means of obtaining within a small extent, and without the necessity of perpetually changing their situation, a plentiful and durable stock of provision ; and, encouraged by this discovery, they prepared for themselves fixed habitations, and progressively constructed houses, villages and towns ; and at length assumed the form of communities and of nations ; and hence it was, that *love of self* became the radical source of every thing that genius has developed, or human power effected.

By the sole aid then of his faculties has man been able to meliorate his situation, and to raise himself to the exalted and astonishing proficiency of his present condition. Happy, too happy would have been his lot, had he scrupulously observed the law imprinted on his nature, and as scrupulously fulfilled the great object of it ! But, alas ! by the baneful indiscretions of his conduct, at one time overlooking, at another overstepping its limits, he has ultimately involved himself in an endless labyrinth of errors and misfortunes, from which he is completely at a loss how to extricate himself: and, thus *love of self*, one while deranged by the intemperate sallies of its own extravagance, at another grown blind and paralytic by virtue of its own inert and listless insensibility, has eventually introduced a train of calamities among mankind, whose number and direful consequences baffle all the arithmetic of human imagination to calculate.

CHAP. VIII.

SOURCE OF THE EVILS OF SOCIETY.

In fact, scarcely had the faculties of men began to expand themselves, than, carried away by the attraction of objects which invite and flatter the senses, they gave themselves up to the full scope of their unbridled desires. The quantity of pleasurable sensations, which Nature had annexed to the gratification of their real corporeal wants in order to connect and link them with their existence, no longer sufficed: not contented with the blessings which the earth afforded them, or which their own industry produced, they were desirous of monopolising and treasuring up a stock of enjoyments for themselves, and therefore grew covetously enamoured of those which their fellow-creatures possessed. Hence a strong man fell upon his weaker neighbour, in order to wrest from him the profit of his labour: and the weaker man solicited the succour of another weak person like himself with the view of repelling this violent encroachment. The strong man, again, in his turn, associated himself with another strong man, and they said to each other, "Why should we fatigue our limbs and our bodies in the acquisition of enjoyments, which we find already prepared for us in the hands of the feeble, who are unable to defend themselves against our superior strength? Let us at once unite and plunder them. We can thus oblige them to labour and toil for us, and we shall enjoy, without any trouble on our parts, the whole fruit of their exertions." Hence the strong, associating on the one side, for the purpose of oppres-

sion, and the weak for resistance on the other, people began reciprocally to torment each other, and a fatal and general discord became finally established upon the earth, in which the passions successively sprouting forth under thousands of new forms, have been in an incessant state of generation, and continually adding fresh links to the chain of human calamities.

Thus, that very *love of self*, which, when duly restrained within the limits of moderation and prudence, was a source of extensive improvement and felicity, in its blind and disordered state, degenerated into a deleterious poison: so that *Covetousness*, the child and companion of ignorance, has, in consequence, been made the productive cause of all the mischiefs that have desolated the earth.

Yes, *Ignorance* and *exuberant desire*, ye are the twin agents, that have forged all the plagues which infest the life of man! It is you, who have inspired him with false ideas of happiness, and prompted him to misconstrue and infringe the laws of nature in the relative connection betwixt himself and exterior objects! Through you, his conduct has been injurious to his own existence, and he has thereby violated the duty he individually owes to himself as a moral being. It is you, that have steeled his heart against compassion, and his mind against the dictates of equitable justice; in consequence of which he has oppressed and afflicted his fellow-beings, and thereby violated the duty he owes, in a social view, to other moral beings like himself. By *ignorance* and *inordinate desire*, man has armed himself against man, family against family, tribe against tribe, and the earth been converted into a bloody

theatre of discord, cabal, and robbery. It is these, that have sown the seeds of a clandestine war in the actual bosom of every state by drawing a line of distinction betwixt one citizen and another, and thus splitting the same society of men into oppressors and oppressed, masters and slaves. Under the influence of these, the heads of particular nations, have, either by recourse to open violence, turned the arms of the community against itself, and built upon mercenary ambition the fabric of political despotism: Or else, by force of shrewd hypocrisy and finesse, have imposed, under the assumed title of the vicegerents of heaven, lying mandates, and a sacrilegious yoke; thus rendering rapaciousness and credulity the fundamental principles of religious despotism. Hence they have eventually corrupted every idea of good and evil, justice and injustice, virtue and vice: and nations have in consequence become involved in the intricacy of a most deplorable labyrinth of errors and calamities!.... Such are your works, ye friends of fell desire and greedy ignorance! such are the malevolent demons that have laid waste the earth; such are the decrees of fate, that have overturned empires; such are the celestial maledictions that have smitten those walls once so glorious, and converted the splendour of a populpus city into a mournful solitude and a scene of ruins!.... But, since all the evils that have afflicted the life of man, have had their source and commencement in his own bosom, it was there also that he ought to have looked for their proper remedies, where certainly they are alone to be found.

CHAP. IX.

ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENTS AND OF LAWS.

But, it was not long before the period arrived, when men, tired of the wrongs and sufferings they had mutually brought upon each other, sighed after peace; and, reflecting on the nature and causes of their misfortunes, they said to one another: "We mutually injure each other by our passions; and, from all of us grasping at every thing, we individually possess nothing. What one seizes by force to-day, another dispossesses him of by the same means to-morrow; and hence our greediness is constantly recoiling upon our own heads. Let us establish certain persons as arbitrators to decide upon our pretensions and claims, in order to conciliate and put an end to our disturbances. When the strong happens to rise up against the weak, the arbitrator shall check him, and shall hold every one at his disposal for the suppression of violence; and the life and property of each being thus under a common guarantee and protection, we shall collectively enjoy all the blessings of nature."

Hence it was, that conventional compacts, tacit or expressed, were formed in different societies, and became the rule of action in individuals, the standard of their rights, and the law of their reciprocal relations. Particular persons were also deputed to enforce the observance of these compacts; and into the hands of these official characters, the people committed the scale of justice for the balancing of their rights, and the sword of power for the punishment of transgressions.

Thus, a happy equilibrium of power and of action, now became established among individuals, which constituted the public safety. The names of equity and of justice were acknowledged and revered in every quarter. Every man being thereby enabled to enjoy in perfect peace the fruits of his labour, gave himself up to the natural emotions of his soul; and the flame of activity, awakened and kept alive by real or expected enjoyments, called forth all the treasures both of art and nature. The fields were covered with crops, the valleys with flocks, the hills with fruitage, the sea with ships; and man himself became happy and powerful upon the earth.

Thus, the disorder which his own imprudence had occasioned, was remedied by his own wisdom. But this very wisdom was simply the effect of the operative laws of nature in the organization of his own being. For, it was to secure his own enjoyments, that he was led to respect those of another, and his intemperate lust after his own personal aggrandizement, found its corrective in a more enlightened *love of self*.

Hence, *love of self*, the eternal spring of action in every individual, has become the necessary basis of all confederative association; and it is on the observance of this natural law, that the fate of every nation has actually depended. Have the conventional laws of human fabrication accorded in any instance with this law, and run parallel with its intentions? In every such case, each member of society, acting under the impulse of a vigorous instinct, has separately exerted all the powers of his nature, and the public felicity has been the resulting compound of all the sundry portions of indi-

vidual felicity. Have these laws, on the contrary, impeded the efforts of man in his progress towards his own happiness? In every such case, his heart, bereft of its natural excitements, has drooped and sunk into languor and inaction; and the feeble and enervated state of individuals has consequently engendered universal debility in the aggregate body.

But, since *love of self*, by its occasional impetuosity and improvidence, is incessantly urging one man to encroach upon another, and, of course, perpetually tending towards the dissolution of society, the whole art of legislation, as well as the virtue of the executive ministers, have, in effect, consisted in regulating the conflict of greedy and contending passions, in keeping all the different branches of power in a proper equipoise, and in securing to each individual his own welfare, so that in case of struggle or hostilities betwixt society and society, the members should all feel an equal interest in the preservation and defence of the commonweal.

Hence it follows, that the domestic splendour and prosperity of empires have been in proportion to the equity of their governments and laws; and their respective power and influence abroad entirely commensurate with the number of persons interested, and their degree of interest in the maintenance of the common cause.

On the other hand, the circumstance of the popular body becoming gradually more numerous, and their consequent relations more complex, having rendered the exact delineation of their rights a point of difficult attainment; perpetual excursions of the passions having given rise to unforeseen incidents; the social com-

pacts that were formed having proved faulty and inadequate, or become invalidated ; the framers of the laws having, either from real or pretended indiscernment, misconceived the object and tenor of them, and the persons appointed to execute them, instead of curbing the licentious desires of others, having abandoned themselves to the same vicious propensities ; in short, all these various causes co-operating, the peace of society at length degenerated into anarchy and wild disorder ; and thus, false systems of law and unjust governments, the inevitable result of greediness and selfish ignorance, have sown the seeds of all those thorns of political affliction, which have been the bane of public happiness, and the subversion of states.

CHAP. X.

GENERAL CAUSES OF THE PROSPERITY OF ANCIENT STATES.

Such, O man, who inquirest after wisdom, have been the causes of the revolutions of those ancient states, of which thou art contemplating the ruins ! Upon whatever spot I fix my view, to whatever period my thoughts recur, the same principles of growth and decay, of rise and decline, present themselves to my mind. When a people at any time has been powerful, or an empire has flourished, it was because the conventional laws were conformable to those of nature ; because the government granted to every man respectively the free use of his faculties, and an equal security of his person and property. When, on the contra-

ry, an empire has sunk into ruin or dissolution, it is because the laws were radically bad or imperfect, or because a corrupt government had trampled upon them and checked their operation. And, when laws and governments, which at the outset were strictly rational and just, have afterwards degenerated and become depraved, it is because the alternative of good and evil, derives from the very nature of the heart of man, from the succession of his inclinations and propensities, the progress of his knowledge, the combination of events and circumstances ; as the history of the species evinces.

In the infancy of nations, while men still continued to inhabit the forests, all being subject to the same wants, and endowed with the same faculties, they were all pretty nearly equal in point of strength ; and this equality was a circumstance superlatively advantageous in the formation of society : For, each individual, on that account, felt himself independent of every one else, so that no one was the slave of another, nor had any one an idea of being master, man being too much a novice at this time to know either servitude or tyranny. Furnished with the full means of providing for his subsistence, he never dreamed of borrowing from strangers. Having neither debts nor demands, he judged of the rights of others by the standard of his own, and thereby conceived strict and accurate ideas of justice. Equally ignorant of the art of indulging himself and of multiplying enjoyments, he thought only of providing what was simply necessary ; and, as superfluity was consequently unknown to him, the desire to engross remained dormant and unexcited ; or, if ac-

tually roused and pushed into action, from its attacking others in the possession of those things that were naturally indispensable, it was of course very vigorously resisted, and the bare apprehension of this resistance kept it in check, and thereby preserved a salutary and due equilibrium.

Thus, primitive equality, even without the aid of a conventional compact, secured personal liberty and property, and produced all the effects of good order and good discipline. Every man laboured singly and for himself: and the heart being busily occupied, had not leisure to stray in the encouragement of unlicensed desires. But, though his enjoyments were few, yet his wants were satisfied; and, as indulgent nature had made these wants less extensive than his ability to gratify them, the progressive labour of his hands soon produced abundance, and this abundance population. The arts now began to develope themselves, and cultivation grew more and more diffusive; till at length the earth covered with numerous inhabitants, was divided into different domains.

As the links of relation in society became gradually more enlarged and complicated, internal order was necessarily more difficult to be maintained. Time and industry having created affluence, desire began to rear its head and to assume a much greater spirit of activity; and, as equality, which may easily support itself among individuals, could not, however, subsist among families, the natural equilibrium was consequently destroyed.—The destruction of this natural equilibrium dictated the necessity of an artificial one in lieu of it; they therefore proceeded, with that view, to the ap-

pointment of leaders or chiefs, and to the establishment of laws. But, as these laws were occasioned by the overgrowth of desire during the inexperience of primitive times, it was but reasonable to expect, that the same cause, would diffuse some part of its own character into their composition.—Various circumstances, however, concurred to check the progress of this malady, and to impose upon governments the rational necessity of being just.

In fact, States being at first weak, and having external enemies to fear, it was of the utmost importance to the chiefs not to oppress the subject: for, by diminishing the interest of the citizens for their government, they would have lessened their means of resistance, have facilitated foreign invasion, and, for the sake of superfluous enjoyments, have thereby endangered their own existence.

Again, the character of the people, with respect to their domestic relations, was sovereignly averse to tyranny. Men had been too long inured to habits of independence, their wants were too limited, and the consciousness of their own strength had become too familiar a feeling, not to make them spurn at the very idea of it.

States being locked and closely united together, it was a matter of no small difficulty to divide the citizens, in order to oppress one part of them by means of the other: Their communication with each other was much too easy, and their interests too obvious and simple. Besides, as every man was at once both proprietor and cultivator, there could have been no inducement for any one to sell himself, and the despot, of course, would not have been able to find mercenaries.

If dissentions, therefore, arose, it was only between families and families, between one faction and another; and a large proportion altogether remained attached to one common interest. Disputes, no doubt, were in such case more warm, but the fear of foreign enemies mitigated their quarrels. If the oppression of a party was at any time effected, since the earth was *entirely* open for its reception, and since men, still simple in their manners, found every where the same advantages, the worsted party forthwith emigrated, and carried its independence to some other quarter.

Ancient states then enjoyed within themselves numerous means of prosperity and power: for, since every man found his own welfare in the constitution of his country, he felt a lively interest in its preservation; and if a foreign power invaded it, having his house and land to defend, he carried to the combat the ardour of a personal cause, and the private enthusiasm of self-defence became public patriotism.

Again, as every action beneficial to the public, called forth its particular esteem and gratitude, every one felt his own importance in being useful, and added his spark to the general flame of emulation: and thus talents and civil virtues were multiplied by the *love of self*.

As every citizen was called upon indiscriminately to contribute an equal proportion of property and personal effort, their military resources and funds were inexhaustible, and the aggregate of their national force peculiarly formidable, whenever the states came to make a practical display of it.

As the ground was free, and its possession easy and

sure, every man was a proprietor; and the division of property, preserved the purity of manners, by rendering luxury impossible.

As every man laboured for his own self, cultivation was more active, and the articles of subsistence more plentiful; so that private opulence in individuals constituted public wealth.

As abundance in necessaries and provisions rendered the support of life perfectly easy, population rapidly advanced, and states quickly arrived at the ultimate complement of their plenitude.

As the produce became greater than the consumption, the desire of commerce necessarily started up amongst them, and exchanges were made between the different people, which proved an additional incentive to their activity, and the means of augmenting their reciprocal enjoyments.

In a word, as certain places at certain periods combined the advantage of good government with that of a good situation in the direct line of commerce, they became rich magazines of merchandise and trade, and powerful seats of dominion. Hence it was, that the riches of India and Europe, accumulated upon the banks of the Nile and the Mediterranean, of the Tigris and the Euphrates, successively gave birth to the splendour of a thousand metropolises.

The people, having thus become rich, appropriated the superfluous part of their fortunes to projects of general and public utility; and this was the era, in every state, of those works, the magnificence of which fills the mind with astonishment—of those wells of Tyre,*

* See respecting these monuments my Travels in Syria, vol. ii. p. 214. From the town or village of Samouat the course of the Euphrates is accom-

of those embankments of the Euphrates, of those subterraneous conduits of Medea,* of those fortresses of the Desert, of those aqueducts of Palmyra, of those temples, of those porticos, . . . And, how labours of such immense magnitude could be perfected without being burthensome on the several communities at large, is not so difficult to imagine, when it is considered, that they were wrought by the equal and co-operative efforts of individuals, actuated by no compulsion but that of freedom, and burning with ambition to be named among the benefactors of their country.

Thus ancient states prospered, because their social institutions were conformable to the genuine laws of nature; and, because the members of those states, pos-

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panied with a double bank, which descends as far as its junction with the Tigris and from thence to the sea, being a length of about an hundred leagues French measure. The height of these artificial banks is not uniform, but increases as you advance from the sea; it may be estimated at from twelve to fifteen feet. But for them the inundation of the river would bury the country around, which is flat, to an extent of twenty or twenty-five leagues, and even notwithstanding these banks, there has been in modern times an overflow which has covered the whole triangle formed by the junction of this river to the Tigris, being a space of country of 130 square leagues. By the stagnation of these waters an epidemical disease of the most fatal nature was occasioned. It follows from hence, 1. That all the flat country bordering upon these rivers, was originally a marsh; 2. That this marsh could not have been inhabited previously to the construction of the banks in question; 3. That these banks could not have been the work but of a population prior as to date: and the elevation of Babylon therefore must have been posterior to that of Nineveh, as I think I have chronologically demonstrated in the memoir above cited. See Encyclopedie, vol. xiii. of Antiquities.

* The modern Aderbidjan, which was a part of Medea, the mountains of Kouderstan, and those of Diarbekr, abound with subterranean canals, by means of which the ancient inhabitants conveyed water to their parched soil, in order to fertilize it. It was regarded as a meritorious act and a religious duty prescribed by Zoroaster, who, instead of preaching celibacy, mortifications, and other pretended virtues of the monkish sort, repeats continually in the passages that are preserved respecting him in the Sad-der and the Zend-avesta, "That the action most pleasing to God is to plough and cultivate the earth, to water it with running streams, to multiply vegetation and living beings, to have numerous flocks, young and fruitful virgins, a multitude of children, &c. &c."

sessed of liberty, and secure in their persons and property, were in a capacity to display the full extent of their faculties, and the whole energy of the *love of self*.

CHAP. XI.

GENERAL CAUSES OF THE REVOLUTIONS AND RUIN OF ANCIENT STATES.

GREEDY and licentious passions at length, however, excited a constant and universal struggle among men, which, prompting individuals and societies to reciprocal invasions, occasioned perpetual commotions and successive revolutions.

At first, in the savage and barbarous state of the more primitive of the human race, this extravagancy of desire, daring and ferocious in its nature, taught rapine, violence, and murder; and the progress of civilization was thereby for a long time retarded.

Afterwards, when societies began to be formed, the effect of the vicious habits which they had acquired, communicating itself to laws and governments, rendered their civil institutions corrupt in principle; and arbitrary and forged rights were accordingly established, which gave the people depraved ideas of justice and morality.

Because one man, for example, was stronger than another, this inequality, the manifest result of natural accident, was taken for the actual *law* of nature;* and,

* Almost all the ancient philosophers and politicians have laid it down as a principle that men are born unequal, that nature has created some to be free, and others to be slaves. Expressions of this kind are to be found in

because the life of the weak was in the discretionary power of the strong, and he did not take it from him, he knavishly usurped over his person, under the colour of this gratuitous self-made *law*, the absurd right of property; and the slavery of individuals thus paved the way for the slavery of nations.

Because the chief of a family could exercise an absolute authority in his own house, he made his own humours and passions the sole rule of his conduct; he conferred or withheld his bounty without regard to equality or justice; and, hence paternal tyranny laid the foundation of political despotism.*

And in societies formed upon such kind of models, where time and industry had made men rich, avidity,

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Aristotle, and even Plato, called the divine, doubtless in the same sense as the mythological reveries which he promulgated. With all the people of antiquity, the Gauls, the Romans, the Athenians, the right of the strongest, was the right of nations; and from the same principle are derived all the political disorders and public national crimes that at present exist.

* Upon this single expression it would be easy to write a long and important chapter. We might prove in it, beyond contradiction, that all the abuses of national governments have sprung from those of domestic government. From that government called patriarchal, which superficial minds have extolled without having analysed it. Numberless facts demonstrate, that with every infant people, in every savage and barbarous state, the father, the chief of the family, is a despot, and a cruel and insolent despot. The wife is his slave, the children his servants. This king sleeps or smokes his pipe, while his wife and daughters perform all the drudgery of the house, and even that of tillage, and cultivation, as far as occupations of this nature are practised in such societies; and no sooner have the boys acquired strength, than they are allowed to beat the females and make them serve and wait upon them as they do upon their fathers. Similar to this is the state of our own uncivilized peasants. In proportion as civilization spreads, the manners become more mild, and the condition of the women improves, till, by a contrary excess, they arrive at dominion, and then a nation becomes effeminate and corrupt. It is remarkable that parental authority is great accordingly as the government is despotic. China, India, and Turkey, are striking examples of this. One would suppose that tyrants gave themselves accomplices, and interested subaltern despots to maintain their authority. In opposition to this the Romans will be cited; but it remains to be proved that the Romans were men truly free; and their quick passage from their republican despotism to their abject servility under the emperors, gives room at least for considerable doubts as to that freedom.

though restricted by the laws, became only more artful and refined, without being at all less active. Under the mask of union and civil peace, it engendered in the bosom of every state an intestine war, in which the citizens, divided into opposite and distinct assemblages, ranks, classes and families, were constantly labouring to appropriate to themselves, under the name of *supreme power*, the privilege of extorting, monopolizing, and controlling every thing at the simple beck of their own passions. And, it is this greedy spirit of *usurpation*, disguised under a variety of forms, but in motive and aim universally the same, that has been the perpetual scourge of nations.

Sometimes setting itself up in opposition to the social compact, or in violation of the existing one, it embroiled the inhabitants of a country in all the tumultuous hurricane of their jarring contentions; and thus the states, in the act of complete dissolution, were racked and tortured, under the name of *anarchy*, by the turbulent and fermenting *passions* of the whole of their members.

Sometimes a people, jealous of its liberty, appointed agents or ministers, who arrogated to themselves the powers of which they were only the trustees or guardians, and wasted the public funds in bribery and corruption at elections, in gaining partizans, and in dividing the people against itself. By these means, from temporary, they contrived to become perpetual, from elective, hereditary magistrates; and thus the state, agitated by the cabals and intrigues of the ambitious, by the pecuniary influence of wealthy factionists, by the venality of the indolent poor, by the empiricism

and *speech-craft* of flowery haranguers and word-jobbing orators, by the daring audacity of the desperate and designing, and by the pusillanimous weakness of the peaceable and virtuous, was convulsively hurled and precipitated from the steady position of undisordered reason, and converted into a *bedlam* of frantic derangement and raging *democracy*.

In one country, the chiefs being co-equal in strength, and mutually afraid of each other, formed impious compacts and coalitions, and, after sharing and distributing among each other, every species of power, rank, and honours, assumed to themselves peculiar *immunities* and prerogatives, erected themselves into separate bodies and distinct classes, and tyrannized in common over the people ; and thus, under the name of *aristocracy*, the happiness and emoluments of the state were sacrificed and devoured by the hungry and unfeeling *passions* of the wealthy and the *great*.

In another country, aiming at the same end but by different means, *sacred impostors* made the credulity of the ignorant subservient to their iniquitous views. In the gloomy sanctuaries of temples, and behind the veil of altars, they made the Gods speak and act, delivered oracles, worked pretended miracles, ordained sacrifices and offerings, and endowed holy institutions ; and thus, under the name of *theocracy* and *religion*, the state was haunted and excruciated by a swarm of *passions* nestling in the heart of a greedy and ambitious priesthood.

Sometimes, wearied of its disorders or its tyrants, and desirous of lessening the number of its evils, a nation gave itself a single master. In that case, if the

powers of the prince were limited, his only wish was to extend them; if left indefinite, he abused the trust that was confided to him; and thus, under the name of *monarchy*, the state was harrassed and tortured by the restless and aspiring *passions* of kings and princes.

Then the factious, taking advantage of the general discontent, flattered the people with the hope of a better master, scattered around them gifts and promises, and dethroned the despot, in order to substitute themselves in his stead; and subsequent disputes for the succession or the division of power thus deluged the state with all the tormenting disorders and devastations of *civil war*.

In fine, among these rivals, one individual more artful or more fortunate than the rest, by gaining the ascendency, concentrated the whole power in himself. Hence, by a singular phenomenon, one man obtained the mastery and lorded it over millions of his fellow-creatures, against their will, and without their suffrage or personal consent; and thus the art of *tyranny* sprouted forth anew from the regenerated root of *exuberant desire*. In fact, speculating on the visible spirit of self-interest, that sways and divides mankind, the ambitious was studiously adroit in fomenting it. Hence he flattered the vanity of one, excited the jealousy of another, favoured the avarice of a third, enflamed the resentment of a fourth, and irritated the passions of all. By opposing interests or prejudices, he sowed the seeds of division and hatred. He promised to the poor the spoil of the rich, to the rich the subjugation of the poor; threatened one man by a second man, one class by another; completely detached the citizens by

reciprocal distrust, made their weakness the constituent materials of his own strength, and saddled them with the galling yoke of *opinion*, of which they mutually tied the knots one for another with their own hands. By means of the army he extorted contributions, and by means of contributions disposed of the army; and, by carrying on the same kind of game with money and places, he bound all the people with an indissoluble chain; and the sickly states, which they composed, fell away into the slow decline of *despotism*.

Thus did one and the same operative principle, varying its action under all the forms that have been enumerated, incessantly shake the fabric of states; and thus an eternal circle of vicissitudes was generated from an eternal circle of *passions*.

And from this unremitting spirit of self-interest and usurpation, there sprung two principal effects equally pernicious: the one was, that, by its subdividing societies into petty or fractional parts, a state of debility was induced, which facilitated their dissolution; the other, that, by its always tending to concentrate the power in a single hand, it was the occasion of societies and states being successively devoured and swallowed up by more powerful ones; and hence became fatal to their peace and mutual existence.*

Just as in a single state, where the nation had been absorbed in a party, that party in a family, and that

* It is remarkable that this has in all instances been the constant progress of societies: beginning with a state of anarchy or democracy, that is, with a great division of power, they have passed to aristocracy, and from aristocracy to monarchy. Does it not hence follow that those who constitute states under the democratic form, destine them to undergo all the intervening troubles between that and monarchy: and that the supreme administration by a single chief is the most natural government, as well as that best calculated for peace?

family in an individual; so likewise a similar kind of absorbent motion took place, in a more enlarged point of view, between state and state, attended with all the mischiefs in the relative political situation of nations, that the other produced in miniature in the civil relation of individuals. One *city* subjected another city its neighbour, and, by adding the conquest to itself, became a province; in like manner, *province* swallowed up province, and coalesced into a *kingdom*; and again, from the same contingency, two kingdoms were incorporated, and thus furnished a bulky and unwieldy empire of gigantic magnitude. But, the internal force of these states, so far from increasing in proportion to their mass, was, on the contrary, diminished; and, so far from the condition of the people being meliorated and rendered more happy, it became from day to day more painful and wretched from a train of reasons eternally flowing from the nature of things. . . . .

Because, from the boundaries of states becoming extended, their administration became more complicated and difficult; and, in order to give motion to the mass, it was necessary to increase and afford a more active range to the prerogatives of the executive branch; and thus there was no longer any proportion between the duty of sovereigns and their power:

Because despots, feeling their own weakness, dreaded every thing that tended to develope the force of nations, and therefore made it their study to attenuate it:

Because nations, from being separated and estranged from each other by the prejudices of ignorance and by inveterate enmities, seconded the perverse disposition of governments, and, from each assembling around itself

a groupe of collateral and mercenary adherents, they reciprocally aggravated their own slavery :

Because, in proportion as the balance of power between states was broken, it became easy for the strong to overwhelm the weak.

Finally, because, in proportion as one state became incorporated in another state, the people were stripped of their laws, their customs, and their peculiar governments, by which they were nominally distinguished from each other ; and thus they lost that *national love of self*, which gave them all their energy in the character of independent communities.

And despots, considering empires in the light of domains or private estates, and the people as their property, abandoned themselves to the most brutal depredations, and to all the lawless excesses of the most arbitrary authority.

And all the public force and wealth of nations were converted into a private supply to be lavished and befooled away in the personal expenditure and on the *babyisms* and whims of a single individual ; and kings, in the yawning wearisome of luxurious satiety, patronized and indulged in every thing that vanity and artificial taste could dictate.* They must forsooth have

* It is equally worthy remark, that the conduct and manners of princes and kings of every country and every age, are found to be precisely the same at similar periods whether of the formation or dissolution of empires. History every where presents the same pictures of luxury and folly; of parks, gardens, lakes, rocks, palaces, furniture, excess of the table, wine, women, concluding with brutality.

The absurd rock in the garden of Versailles has alone cost three millions. I have sometimes calculated what might have been done with the expense of the three pyramids of Gizah, and I have found that it would easily have constructed, from the Red Sea to Alexandria, a canal 150 feet wide, and 30 deep, completely covered in with cut stones and a parapet, together with a fortified and commercial town, consisting of four hundred houses furnished with cisterns. What difference in point of utility between such a canal and these pyramids ?

gardens constructed upon arches, and rivers carried to the summit of mountains; for them too, fertile fields must be changed into parks for deer, lakes formed where there was no water, and rocks elevated in the midst of lakes; they must have palaces constructed of marble and porphyry, and the furniture ornamented with gold and diamonds. Millions of hands were thus employed in frivolous and useless labours; and the luxury and absurdities of princes, being aped by their parasites, and descending step by step to the very lowest ranks in society, became a general source of corruption and empoverishment.

And, from this insatiable thirst of enjoyments, the ordinary taxation becoming incompetent to the expenditure, the quota was accordingly augmented: the consequence of which was, that the cultivator, finding his toil increase without any indemnification, grew dispirited and lost his wonted courage; the merchant seeing himself robbed, became sick and disgusted with his own industry; and the multitude, condemned to a state of poverty, exerted themselves no farther than the bare procurement of necessaries required, so that every species of productive activity was totally destroyed.

The surcharge of taxes rendering the possession of lands peculiarly burthensome, the humble proprietor, pining under the heavy heart-ache of discontent, abandoned his ground, or sold it to the man of power and opulence; and hence the mass of wealth became centered in a few individuals. Again, as the laws and institutions were favourable to this partial accumulation of property, nations were in consequence divided into a small body of indolent rich, and a multitude of mer-

cenary poor. The people, thus reduced to the lowest degree of indigence, debased themselves; the great, cloyed with superfluity, became, in their turn, depraved; and the number of citizens really interested in the welfare and preservation of the state, decreasing, its strength and existence were, of course, so much the more precarious.

Besides, as there was nothing to excite emulation or encourage instruction, the minds of men sunk into profound ignorance.

The administration of affairs being moreover *secret* and *mysterious*, there remained no visible means of reform or prospect of better times; and, as the chiefs ruled only by violence and fraud, the people looked upon them in no other view, than as a faction of public enemies; and therefore all harmony between the governed and the governors was necessarily at an end.

It was amid this nest of pestilential corruption, that the states of opulent Asia became enervated; but it happened, however, at length, that the vagrant and poor inhabitants of the *deserts* and the adjacent *mountains* grew anxiously covetous of the seducing enjoyments of the *fertile plains;* and, instigated by a community of desires, they attacked *polished empires*, and overturned the thrones of despots. The revolutions thus accomplished were rapid and easy; first, because the policy of tyrants had previously rendered their subjects feeble and effeminate, razed the fortresses, and destroyed their military ardour; and secondly, because the oppressed subject was without personal interest, and the mercenary soldier without courage.

The result of whole nations being, through the co-

operation of these circumstances, reduced to a state of slavery by hordes of barbarians, was, that the empires, formed of a conquering and a vanquished people, united in their bosoms two classes of men naturally opposite and inimical to each other. Hence all the principles of society became dissolved: there was no longer either a *common* interest, or a *public* spirit: on the contrary, a distinction of *casts* and of *kindred* was established, which reduced the maintenance of disorder into a regular system; and, according as a man was descended from this or that blood, he was born vassal or tyrant, live-stock or proprietor.

The oppressors, being, in this case, less numerous than the oppressed, it became requisite, in order to support this false equilibrium, to bring the *science of oppression* to a more consummate state of perfection. And, as the art of governing was now nothing more than that of subjecting the many to the few, it became necessary, in order to obtain an obedience so repugnant to instinct, to establish more severe penalties; and the cruelty of the laws consequently rendered the manners of the people completely atrocious.—Again, as personal distinctions established in the state two separate codes, two species of justice, and two kinds of rights, the people, placed between the natural inclinations of their hearts and the oath which their mouths were obliged to pronounce, had two consciences, operating in direct contradiction to each other: and ideas of just and unjust had, of course, no longer a foundation in the understanding.

In this deplorable situation, the disconsolate people fell into a state of melancholy dejection and comfortless

despair ; and, as natural accidents gave additional weight to the enormous load of evils under which they already groaned, raving and bewildered amid such a number of calamities, they attributed the cause of them to the agency of superior and invisible powers ; and, because they had tyrants upon earth, they supposed forsooth that there were tyrants also in heaven ; and, thus *superstition* came forth to aggravate the disasters of nations.

Hence originated gloomy and misanthropic systems of religion, and doctrines of the most noxious tendency, which depicted the Gods with *malignant* and *envious* passions, like human despots. To appease which, man offered the sacrifice of all his enjoyments, punished himself with a multitude of mortifications and self-denials, and thereby counteracted and opposed the genuine laws of nature. Considering his *pleasures* as *crimes*, his *endurance* and *sufferings* as *expiations*, he endeavoured *to cherish a passion for pain, and to abjure and renounce all love for himself ;* he persecuted his senses, abominated and detested his life, and by a *self-crucifying and anti-social system of morals*, nations thus habitually lapsed into a morbid and sullen apathy, pregnant with all the torpid inactivity of death itself.

But, as provident nature had gifted the heart of man with an inexhaustible fund of hope, on perceiving his desires frustrated in the search of happiness here, he resolved to pursue it elsewhere. Hence, by a pleasing illusion, he *feigned to himself another country*, a delicious *asylum*, where, out of the reach of tyrants, he should regain all his lost rights. But this self-enchant-

ment only opened a door for the introduction of a new train of disorders. For, smitten with the captivating perspective of his *imaginary world*, man now despised the world of nature, and for visionary *hopes* rejected the *reality* itself. He no longer considered his life but as a *fatiguing journey*, or a *painful* dream :—his body as a *prison* that withheld him from his expected state of felicity, and the earth as a place of *exile* and *pilgrimage*, which he disdained to cultivate. At this period *a sacred sloth diffused itself through the political world*, in consequence of which the fields were deserted, waste lands were augmented, empires were dispeopled, and public works neglected ; while ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism, every where combining their baleful influence, multiplied the vestiges of devastation and ruin in all quarters.

Thus, agitated by their own passions, men, whether in their collective or individual capacity, altogether greedy and improvident, passing from slavery to tyranny, from pride to debasement, from presumption to despondency, have been themselves the eternal instruments of their own misfortunes.

Such was the natural simplicity of the principles, by which the destiny of ancient states was directed ; such was the concatenation of causes and effects, according to which they severally rose or fell in the scale of fortune, just as the *physical* laws of the human heart were observed or infringed. In the successive series of their vicissitudes, a hundred different people, a hundred empires, by their periodical declension, power, conquest, or annihilation, have, at intervals, read again and again these awful and instructive lessons to man-

kind. And yet all these tremendous and salutary remonstrances are at present either obsolete or thrown away upon succeeding generations! The disorders of past times have re-appeared in the present! The leaders of governments still march on in the same fatal paths of falsehood and deceitful tyranny: and the people still wander, as of old, in the gloomy darkness of blindfold superstition and bewildered ignorance!"

"Well!" continued the Genius, assuming a more stern and emphatical tone of speech, "since the experience bequeathed to the present race of men by those of past ages is either frowned upon, or become superannuated and extinct: since the errors and dismal misconduct of their predecessors are no longer doomed to enlighten the practice of posterity, the terrible examples that are now forgotten, and the tragic scenes which were formerly acted by the people of antiquity, are now about to be re-exhibited; fresh revolutions will again distract communities and empires; powerful thrones will, as before, be overthrown, and melancholy catastrophes remind the human species, that the laws of nature and the precepts of wisdom and of truth cannot be trampled upon with impunity."

CHAP XII.

LESSONS, TAUGHT BY THE ANCIENTS, REPEATED IN MODERN TIMES.

Such was the discourse, which the Genius addressed to me.—Struck with the justness and impressive cogency of his narration, and, a multiplicity of ideas

crowding upon my mind, which, while they thwarted my habits, led my judgment at the same time captive, I remained deeply absorbed in a profound silence. Meanwhile, as in this serious and pensive attitude, I kept my eyes fixed upon Asia, volumes of smoke and of flames northward, on the shores of the *Black Sea*, and in the plains of the *Crimea*, suddenly attracted my attention. They appeared to ascend at the same time from every part of the peninsula, and then, after passing by the isthmus to the continent, they pursued their course, as if driven by a westerly wind, along the muddy lake of *Asoph*, and were lost in the verdant plains of the *Coban*. Observing more attentively the direction of these volumes of smoke, I perceived that they were preceded or followed by swarms of moving beings, which, like ants or locusts disturbed by the foot of a passenger, were most busily active. Sometimes they seemed to move onward, and to rush with precipitation against each other, and numbers, subsequent to this violent approach, remained perfectly motionless. Whilst my mind was anxiously engaged by the singularity of this appearance, and I was striving to distinguish the objects:—"Dost thou see those fires," said the Genius, "which spread over the earth, and art thou acquainted with their causes and effects?"—Addressing the Genius, I replied, "I see indeed columns of flame and smoke, and something like insects accompanying them; but, discerning only very indistinctly even towns and monuments, how can my sight have an accurate perception of such microscopic and diminutive creatures? All I can see is, that these insects seem to carry on a sort of mock battles; for, they appear to advance, approach,

attack, and pursue each other."—"There is no mockery in the case," said the Genius; "they are actually fighting in good earnest."—"And what, in the name of wonder," said I, "are those silly and furious little animalculæ, that are so very active in destroying each other? Is not their life short enough, that live only for a single day, without further abridging it by violence and murder?"—Scarcely had the question escaped my lips, when, on a sudden, touching my eyes and ears,—"*Listen*," said he, "and *observe*."—Immediately, directing my eyes towards the same objects, "Alas!" said I, pierced with anguish, "those *columns* of flame, those insects, O Genius! are absolutely men and the ravages of war! Those blazing streams of fire ascend from towns and villages! I see the horsemen that are setting them in flames: I see them with their drawn sabres over-running the country. Multitudes of old men, women, and children, are flying in dismay before them. I see other horsemen, who, with their pikes upon their shoulders, accompany and direct them: I can even distinguish by their horses of reserve which they lead, by their *kalpacks*, and by their tufts of hair,* that they are *Tartars*; and, without doubt, those who pursue them in triangular hats and green uniforms are *Muscovites*. Yes, yes, now I understand it: the war has just broken out afresh between the empire of the *Czars* and that of the *Sultans*."—"No,

* A Tartar horse-man has always two horses, of which he leads one in hand.... The *kalpack* is a bonnet made of the skin of a sheep or other animal. The part of the head covered by this bonnet is shaved, with the exception of a tuft, about the size of a crown piece and which is suffered to grow to the length of seven or eight inches, precisely where our priests place their tonsure. It is by this tuft of hair, worn by the majority of Musulmen, that the angel of the tomb is to take the elect and carry them to Paradise.

not yet," replied the Genius ; "this is only the prelude to it. These Tartars have been, and would still be troublesome neighbours ; but the Muscovites are ridding themselves of them. Their country is a very convenient and desirable object to them ; the acquisition of it will round and make their dominion more compact ; and, as a preparatory step to the revolutionary project that has been conceived, the throne of the *Guerais* is overthrown."

And I actually saw the Russian standards floating on the Crimea, and their naval flag soon after displayed upon the *Euxine*.

Meanwhile, at the cries of the fugutive Tartars, the empire of the Mussulmen was in commotion. "Our brethren," exclaimed the children of Mahomet, "are driven from their habitations ; the people of the Prophet are outraged; infidels are in possession of a consecrated land,* and profane the temples of Islamism ! Let us arm ourselves for the combat, in order to avenge the glory of God and our own cause."

Accordingly a general preparation for war took place in the two empires. Armed men, provisions, ammunition, and all the murderous accoutrements of battle were every where mustered. But, my attention was more particularly caught by the immense crowds that, in both nations thronged to the temples. On one side, the Mussulmen, assembled before their mosques, washed their hands and feet, pared their nails, and combed their beard ; then spreading carpets upon the ground,

* It is not in the power of the sultan to cede to a foreign power a province inhabited by *true believers*. The people, instigated by the lawyers, would not fail to revolt. This is one reason which has led those who know the Turks, to regard as chimerical the ceding of Candia, Cyprus and Egypt, projected by certain European potentates.

and turning themselves towards the south, with their arms sometimes crossed and sometimes extended, they performed their genuflections and prostrations. And, calling to mind the disasters they had experienced during the last war, they cried out:—"Oh! gracious and merciful God, hast thou then abandoned thy faithful people? Why dost Thou, who hast promised to thy Prophet the dominion of nations, and signalized religion by so many triumphs, deliver up *true believers* to the sword of *infidels?*" And the *Imans* and the *Santons* said to the people: "It is the chastisement of your sins. Ye eat pork, ye drink wine, and ye touch things that are unclean: wherefore God hath punished you. Do penance, purify yourselves, and say your creed;* fast from the rising to the setting sun; give tithes of your goods to the mosques: go to Mecca, and God will render your arms victorious." Then the people, resuming their courage, cried aloud in a furious transport of passion: "There is but one God, and Mahomet is his Prophet! accursed be every one that believeth not! . . . Indulgent God! grant us power to exterminate these Christians: it is for thy glory that we fight, and by our death we are martyrs to thy name." —And having offered sacrifices, they prepared themselves for battle.

Again, the Russians, in like manner, on their knees, exclaimed "Let us give thanks to God, and celebrate his power: for, he has strengthened our arm to humble his enemies. . . . . Beneficent God! incline thine ear to our prayers. To please thee, we will, for three days, eat neither meat nor eggs. Grant us power to

* "There is but one God, and Mahomet is his Prophet."

exterminate those impious Mahometans, and to overthrow their empire; and we will give thee tithes of the spoil, and erect new temples for thy worship." The priests then filled the churches with a cloud of smoke, and said to the people: "We pray for you, and God accepts our incense, and blesses your arms. Continue to fast and to fight: tell us the faults you have secretly committed; and bestow your goods on the church; and we will absolve you of your sins, and you shall die in a state of grace."—And they sprinkled water on the people, and distributed among them small bones of departed saints to serve as amulets and talismans; and the people breathed nothing but war and slaughter.

Struck with the contrast of the same passions, and lamenting to myself their pernicious consequences, I was reflecting on the difficulty the common judge betwixt the two would find in complying with such opposite demands, when the Genius, in an angry tone, vehemently exclaimed:

"What sounds of infatuation and madness are those which stun my ear? What blind and delirious insanity is this, which perverts the minds of nations? Return, ye sacrilegious prayers, to the earth from whence ye proceed! Repel, ye heavens, these murderous vows, these impious thanksgivings, this fawning blasphemy! Is it thus, ye profane and silly mortals, that ye revere the Divinity? And how do ye think that he, whom ye call your common Father, ought to receive the homage of his children, who butcher and massacre each other? Say, ye Conquerors, with what countenance ought he to behold your arms reeking with the very blood of his own parental and divine creation? Tell me, ye con-

quered, what hope do ye, or can ye place in all those plaintive supplications and vain wailings of contrition? Has God, do ye think, the heart of Man, and passions to make him changeable? Is he swayed like you by vengeance and pity, by rage and penitence? What preposterous and base ideas have men conceived of the most exalted of beings! To hear these people, one should imagine *God* to be of as whimsical and capricious a temper as Man himself: that He is alternately vexed and pacified, has temporary paroxysms of love and of hatred, and only chastises or caresses by fits and starts; that he has the weakness or meanness to smother and disguise his resentments; that he has the childish cruelty, inconsistency, and perfidy, in opposition to the rest of the attributes ascribed to *Him*, to spread snares for men merely to see them caught in them; that He punishes the evil which He himself permits; that He foresees crimes and guilt without preventing them; that, like a corrupt judge, he is to be bribed and influenced by gifts and offerings, that like a fickle despot, he one moment makes laws, and the next revokes them; that, like a peevish tyrant, He withholds or dispenses his favours without rule or distinction, and is only to be won upon by the very grossest adulation and servility. . . . . Yes, yes, I have now detected the falsehood and deception of man! On reviewing the picture, which he has drawn of the Divinity, I said to myself: "*No, no, it is not God that hath made Man after his own image: it is Man, that hath personified and made God after his own image*; he has gifted Him with a mind shaped precisely after his own, palmed upon him human passions, opinions, and

habits, and fashioned his judgment and capacity in exact conformity to the frame and dimensions of his own. —And, when, in this strange medley of discordant confusion, his principles have been shewn to be contradictory and self-subversive, in order to rescue the creature of his own prejudiced imagination from the charge of having committed suicide upon itself, he has put hypocrisy in the place of candour and argumentative proof, and, in a tone of affected humility, lamented the imbecility and uncertainty of human *reason*, calling the man-created absurdities naturalized in his own brain, by the high sounding title of *the sacred mysteries of God*."

" Thus, he has said ;—God is *immutable*, and yet he has been for ever praying to Him to induce him to *change*. He has said too, that He is *incomprehensible*, and yet he has for ever been pretending to be the interpreter of His divine will and attributes."

" An upstart race of *impostors* has sprouted forth, like mushrooms, upon the earth, who, calling themselves the *confidants of God*, and magisterially assuming to themselves the official character of the sacred preceptors of the people, have opened the flood-gates of falsehood and iniquity. They have affixed an extraordinary degree of merit to formalities and performances, which are either indifferent in themselves, or ridiculously absurd. They have dignified with the appellation of virtue the observance of certain postures of the body, and the repetition or articulation with the mouth of certain words and names. They have transformed into impiety the eating of certain meats and drinking of certain drinks on some days, though not on others.

Hence it is, that the Jew would sooner die than *work on the Sabbath.* Thus too it is, that the Persian would endure suffocation before he would *blow* the *fire* with his *breath.* It is thus the oriential Indian places supreme perfection in the *smearing* of himself with *cow-dung,* and mysteriously *pronouncing* the word *Aum.** It is thus the Musulman believes, that he *has* atoned for all his sins by the ablution of his head and his arms; and disputes, sabre in hand, whether he ought to *begin* this devotional act at the *elbow*† or at the *points* of his *fingers.* It is thus the Christian papist would believe himself damned, were he to eat the grease or fat of animal food instead of milk or butter. O what sublime and truly celestial doctrines! What pure morality, and how worthy of apostleship and martyrdom! I will cross the seas to teach these admirable laws to savage people and distant nations. I will say to them: "*Children of nature, how long will you wander in the paths of ignorance?* How long will you be blind and shut your eyes against the true principles of morality and religion? Go and visit civilized countries, and receive lessons on these subjects from pious and learned nations. They will teach you, that, to

* This word is in the religion of the Hindoos a sacred emblem of the Divinity. It is only to be pronounced in secret, without being heard by any one. It is formed of three letters, of which the first, *a*, signifies the principal of all, the Creator, Brama; the second, *u*, the conservator, Vichenou; and the last, *m*, the destroyer, who puts an end to all, Chiven. It is pronounced like the monosyllable *om*, and expresses the unity of those three Gods. The idea is precisely that of the Alpha and Omega mentioned in the New Testament.

† This is one of the grand points of schism between the partizans of Omar and those of Ali. Suppose two Mahometans to meet on a journey and to accost each other with brotherly affection: the hour of prayer arrives; one begins his ablution at his fingers, the other at his elbow, and instantly they are mortal enemies. O sublime importance of religious opinions! O profound philosophy of the authors of them!

please God, you must, in certain months of the year, starve yourselves nearly to death the whole day long with hunger and thirst. They will teach you how you may shed the blood of your neighbour, and wash away the stain, by repeating a profession of faith, and making a methodical ablution: how you may rob him of his property, and be absolved from the guilt, by sharing it with certain drones in society, who are professionally devoted to live upon the fruits of his labour."

"*O thou Sovereign and mysterious Power of the Universe! Thou secret Mover of Nature! Thou universal Soul of every thing that lives! Thou infinite and incomprehensible Being*, whom, under so many names, mortals, though ignorant of thee, yet worship! God, who, in the immensity of the heavens dost guide revolving worlds, and people the abyss of space with clusters and millions of suns: say, in what view do those human insects, which I can with difficulty distinguish upon the earth, appear in thy eyes? Whilst thou art busily directing the stars in their orbits, what to thee are the puny, insignificant worms, that are in commotion and squabbling in the dust? Of what importance to thy infinite greatness are their paltry distinctions of sects and parties? And what concern hast thou with the nonsensical subtleties, with which their folly is perplexing itself?"

"And do you, ye credulous mortals, point out to me the efficacy and beneficial tendency of your practical discipline! During the many ages that you have observed or varied the canonical directions of your ritual, what changes have your religious *pharmacopoeias* and sacred *nostrums* wrought in the laws of nature? Has

the sun shone with greater brilliance? Is the course of the seasons in any wise altered? Is the earth more fruitful? Are the people more happy? If God be benign and good, how can he be delighted with the infliction of your self-abusive and rigorous penances? If He be infinite, what addition can your homage make to his glory? If, by his legislative decrees He has anticipated and predestinated every thing, can your prayers cause them to be revised or rescinded? Reply, ye dupes of inconsistency, to these queries.

"Again, ye conquerors, who pretend by your arms to serve God, is He, let me ask, in want of your aid! If he wishes to punish, are not earthquakes, volcanoes, and lightning at his command? And, does a God of clemency know no other mode of correction but by total extermination?

"Ye Mussulmen, if your misfortunes were the chastisements of heaven for violating the chastity of the *five precepts*, would prosperity be showered upon the Franks, who laugh at them? If it be by the laws of the *Koran*, that God governs the earth, what were the principles by which He judged the nations that existed before the Prophet, and all the numerous bodies of people who drank wine, ate pork, and never paid a single visit to *Mecca*, and yet were permitted to raise up powerful empires? By what laws did he judge the *Sabeans* of *Nineveh* and of *Babylon*; the *Persian* who *worshipped fire*; the *Greek* and *Roman idolaters*; the *ancient kingdoms of the Nile*, and your own progenitors, the *Arabs* and *Tartars*? How does he at present judge all the various nations that either disclaim or are ignorant of your worship, the numerous

casts of India, the vast empire of the Chinese, the swarthy tribes of Africa, the Islanders of the Atlantic Ocean, the wandering and uncivilized race of America?

"Presumptuous and ignorant mortals, who exclusively arrogate to yourselves the whole surface of the earth, as if forsooth no other men or principles could have an existence, were God to summon together at once all past and present generations, what numerical proportion would those Christian and Mussulman sects, calling themselves *Catholic* or *Universal*, bear in the vast multitudinous assemblage? What would be the decision of his equal and impartial justice respecting the existence of a *real Catholicism* or *Universalism* among mankind? It is here, in estimating the *general* system of his government, that your mind loses and bewilders itself in the motley crowd of dogmatical speculations and conceits; but, it is here, notwithstanding, that genuine truth shines forth in all its evidence. It is here, that we trace the powerful and simple laws of nature and reason: *ubiquitarian* laws of *one common unitarian mover*, a God impartial and just in all his proceedings, who, in order that he may send his rain upon a country, asks not who is its prophet; who causes his sun equally to shine on every race of men, no matter whether distinguished by a *white* or a *black* complexion, on the Jew as well as on the Mussulman, on the Heathen idolater as well as on the Christian; who prospers the harvests where the hand of industry is employed in their cultivation; who multiplies the inhabitants of every country where order and active diligence prevail; who causes every empire to thrive and flourish where jus-

tice is practically observed, where the powerful man is kept within due bounds by force of the laws, and the poor protected by virtue of the same; where the weak lives in safety, and where, in fine, all the members of the community indiscriminately enjoy the rights, which they inherit from nature and an equitable compact.

"Such are the principles by which nations are *doomed* to be judged! Such the true religion, by which the fate of empires is balanced and directed, and which, ye Ottomans, has uniformly governed the destiny of your own empire! Interrogate your ancestors? Ask them by what means they began to raise themselves to *that* elevated pitch of greatness, at a time, when, in a state of poverty and *idolatry*, and only few in number, they came from the deserts of Tartary to encamp in those fertile countries? Ask them, whether it was by *Islamism*, at that period unknown to them, that they conquered the Greeks and Arabs: Or, by courage, prudence, moderation, and unanimity, the true constituent elements of all *power* in the *social state?* In those days, the Sultan himself administered justice, and was personally vigilant in the maintenance of discipline and good order: in those days the prevaricating judge, and the governor who practised extortion, were punished, and the people lived in peace and comfort: the cultivator was secure from the rapine of the janizary, and the lands were productive: the public roads were safe, and commerce disseminated abundance among you. It is true, ye were a confederacy of robbers, but ye were just among yourselves. Ye subjugated nations, but ye did not oppress them. Harassed by their own princes, they preferred the alternative of becoming

tributary to you. "*Of what importance is it to me,*" said the Christian, "*whether my master be pleased with images, or he dash them in pieces, provided he acts with justice towards me? God will judge his doctrine in heaven.* Ye were temperate, and inured to hardship; your enemies pampered and effeminate: ye were skilled in the art of warfare: your enemies had lost all knowledge of military principles: ye had experienced chiefs, veteran and disciplined troops: the hope of booty excited ardour: bravery was recompensed: cowardice and want of discipline punished; and all the energetic powers of the human heart were called into action. Thus, ye conquered a hundred nations, and out of the component mass of vanquished kingdoms organized and founded an immense empire.

"But your character and manners afterwards wore a very different complexion. The laws of nature, however, did not less operate in the reverse of your fortune, than during the continuance of your prosperity. After having effectually devoured your enemies, the flame of your ambition, always kindling afresh, at length, by reverberating its own heat upon itself, became so concentrated and intense, that ye were yourselves eventually devoured by the intestine fire of your own passions. Having become rich, ye were divided among yourselves respecting the participation and enjoyment of your wealth, and disorder was accordingly diffused through every class of your society. The Sultan, intoxicated with his own greatness, lost sight of the object of his duty, and all the vices of arbitrary power began to unfold themselves. Meeting with no kind of obstacle to divert the course of his desires, he

became a most depraved being. Weak, and inflated with pride, he spurned from him the people, and would no longer permit himself to be influenced and directed by their voice. Ignorant, and bloated with flattery, he neglected all instruction, all study, and sunk into a state of total incapacity. Thus, personally disqualified for the administration of affairs, he removed the burthen from his own shoulders, and committed the trust to secondary hirelings, and these mercenary agents deceived him. To satisfy their own passions, they stimulated and increased his; they multiplied his wants, and his enormous luxury swallowed up every thing. He was no longer contented with the frugal table, the modest attire, and the simple habitation of his ancestors: land and sea must forsooth be ransacked to satisfy his pride; the most scarce furs must be fetched from the very pole, and the most costly tissues from the equator; he consumed at a meal the tribute of a city, and in the expenses of a single day the revenue of a province. He became invested with an army of women, eunuchs, and courtiers. He was told that the virtue of kings consisted in liberality; and the munificence and treasures of the people were accordingly delivered into the hands of insidious sycophants and parasites. In imitation of the master, the slaves were also desirous of having magnificent houses, furniture of exquisite workmanship, carpets richly embroidered, and vessels of gold and silver for the very lowest and vilest of uses; and hence, all the wealth of the empire was squandered and absorbed in the *Serai*.

"To satisfy the cravings of this unbounded luxury, the *slaves* and the *women* sold their influence; and ve-

nality introduced a general state of depravity. They sold the favour of the prince to the Visier, and the Visier sold the empire. They sold the law to the Cadi, and the Cadi became a seller of justice. They sold the altar to the priest, and the priest sold heaven itself. And, as every thing was obtainable by gold, nothing was left unpractised to obtain gold. For the sake of this, friend betrayed friend ; the child his father ; the servant his master ; the wife her honour ; the merchant his conscience ; and there no longer existed in the state any vestige of good faith, moral virtue, harmony, or strength.

" The Pacha, who paid the rents or finances of his office to the government of his province, farmed it out for a stipulated revenue, and exercised upon it every species of extortion. He sold, in his turn, the collection of the taxes, the command of the troops, and the superintendency of the villages: and, as every employment was only of a *fugitive* and *temporary* nature, rapine, propagated from rank to rank, was rapid and precipitate in its progress. The exciseman harassed the merchant by his enormous exactions, and trade was crushed and annihilated. The Aga pillaged the husbandman, and cultivation declined. The labourer, robbed of his little capital, was effectually disabled from sowing his field : taxes, nevertheless, became due, and he was destitute of the means wherewith to pay them ; he was threatened with the corporal punishment of the *Bastinado*, and driven to the expedient of a loan : specie, for want of security, was secreted and withheld from circulation ; the *interest* of money

became prodigiously exorbitant, and the usury of the rich aggravated the misery of the labouring class.

"The accidental inclemency of the seasons and excessive droughts had foiled their industry and rendered the harvests abortive; but government would neither forego nor postpone its demands. Their distress in the villages grew hourly more and more formidable: a part of the inhabitants took refuge in the larger towns or cities; the burthen upon those that remained became greater; their ruin was consequently expedited, and the country speedily depopulated.

"At length driven to the last extremity by tyranny and outrage, certain villages revolted and broke out into open rebellion. The Pacha, so far from considering this as a subject of regret, made it a source of self-congratulation. Under this impression, he made war upon them, took their houses by storm, plundered them of the whole of their household and moveably property, and stript them of their cattle. And, after he had thus reduced their land to a desert waste, he exclaimed: "*What care I; I shall be removed to-morrow.*"

"Hence the country, destitute of hands to superintend and cultivate it, was abandoned to itself: and periodical rains, or torrents that occasionally burst and overflowed their banks, settled into fens and swamps. The exhalations from these, in so warm a climate, gave rise to epidemical and putrid diseases, and to a multiplicity of other morbid complaints, which were followed by a superaddition of penury, depopulation, and ruin, that filled up the measure of their calamities even beyond the brim.

"But, alas! who can enumerate all the evils of this tyrannical system of government!

"Sometimes the Pachas make war against each other, and, to avenge their personal quarrels, provinces, which form a part of the same identical state, are laid waste. Sometimes, dreading their masters, they aim at independence, and draw upon their innocent subjects the chastisement due to their own revolt. Sometimes, fearful of those very subjects, they subsidize and take into their commission foreign troops, and, in order to make them steady to their interest, they indulge them in every species of licentiousness and robbery. In one place, they commence an action against a rich man, and plunder him upon false pretences. In another, they suborn witnesses, and lay them under a contribution for an offence that was never committed. Every where they excite the hatred of sects one against another, and encourage their informations, in order to filch out of them, by dint of authority, penal fines or *avanias*. They extort from persons their property; inflict corporal punishment upon them; and, when their injudicious avarice has amassed into one heap the collective riches of a whole province, the supreme government, with the most diabolical perfidy, feigning to avenge the oppressed inhabitants, seizes, on its own behalf, the spoil of the people in the spoil of the culprit, and wantonly sheds blood for the pretended expiation of a crime of which it was itself the accomplice.

"O ye iniquitous fiends, be ye sovereigns or ministers, who sport with the lives and property of the people! Is it you, who gave the breath of life to man, in order to take it away from him? Is it you, who fertilize the earth, in order to squander away the abundance of its produce? Do your fatigue your limbs with

ploughing the field? Do you toil in the heat of the sun, and exhaust yourselves with thirst in cutting down the harvest, and in thrashing the sheaves? Do you watch, like the shepherd, exposed to the nocturnal dew? Do you traverse the deserts like the indefatigable merchant? Alas! whenever I have reflected on the cruelty and insolence of the powerful, my indignation has been roused within me, and I have said, in my anger: What! will there never appear upon the earth a race of men, who shall boldly avenge the cause of the people, and punish their tyrants! A mere handful of *human** beasts of prey devour the multitude, and the multitude tamely suffer themselves to be devoured! O shame! O dastardly and unmanly cowardice! Awake, ye degraded people, awake to the recognition of your rights! *From you alone all authority is derived: to you all power belongs.* Vainly do kings command you *in the name of God* and *of their lance:* soldiers obey not the summons. Since *God supports the Sultan*, your aid is superfluous and useless; since his irresistible sword is all-sufficient, he has no need of yours; let us see what he can do of himself. . . . Imagine the soldiers to have laid down their arms; and behold the *masters of the world* as helpless and feeble as

* The military, sacerdotal and judicial aristocracies, seem to think the world and all it contains, created for their exclusive gratification. The men and women in it have been treated as instruments merely subservient to their will and pleasure. The labour, blood, and sweat of the subject, the vassal and the peasant, are consumed to support the wars of the prince; the pride of the nobles, the luxury of the priests or the cupidity of the courts; whilst the cultivators of the earth, on whose industry all depend, are treated more contumeleously than horses or dogs. The inventors of arts, the improvers of life, those who have mitigated evil and augmented the good allotted to man, are despised and oppressed. The people thus debased and embruted, have too long wallowed in torpid and polluted servitude. But an illustrious Era has arrived, and man relieved from the brutalizing efforts of slavery and superstition will be free and happy.

the meanest of their *subjects !* People ! know then that those who govern you, are your *chiefs* and not your *masters*, your *delegates* and not your *proprietors ;* that they have by right no authority *over you*, except *by your own appointment*, and *for your own advantage ;* that your national wealth is the legitimate property of nobody but *your own selves*, and that they are personally accountable to you for the use and expenditure of it ; that God has made all men *equal*, whether kings or subjects, and that no human being on earth has a right to oppress his fellow-creature.

" But, this nation and its chiefs disregard these sacred truths. . . . Well, well, since they will have it so, they will by and bye feel the consequences of their own error and fatuity. For, their judgment is already passed ; and the day is approaching when this colossus of power shall fall to pieces, crushed by its own weight. Yes, I swear by the *ruins of so many demolished empires*, that *the imperial Crescent* shall undergo the same fate as the states, whose mode of government it has imitated ! A foreign people shall drive the Sultans from their metropolis ; *the throne of Orkhan shall be subverted ; the last branch of his race shall be lopped away ;* and the horde of the *Oguzians** deprived of their chief, shall be dispersed like that of the *Nogaians*. In this dissolution, the subjects of the empire, freed from the yoke that held them together, will resume their ancient distinctions, and a general anarchy will ensue, as happened in the empire of the *Sophis*,†

* Before the Turks took the name of their chief Othman I. they bore that of Oguzians ; and it was under this appellation that they were driven out of Tartary by Gengis, and came from the borders of Gihoun to settle themselves in Anatolia.

† In Persia, after the death of Thamas-Koulikan, each province had its

till there shall spring up legislators among the Arabs, the Armenians, or the Greeks, who shall form new states. . . . . Oh! were there but a sagacious and enterprising race of men to be found on the earth, what materials of greatness and glory are here! . . . . But the fated hour approaches. The cry of war accosts my ear, and the catastrophe is about to commence. In vain the Sultan draws out his opposing armies; his ignorant soldiers are defeated and put to the rout. In vain he calls upon his *subjects:* their hearts are calous and inflexible; they very cooly reply: "*It is written and decreed; and what is it to us who is to be our master? we cannot possibly lose by the change.*" In vain do the true believers invoke heaven and the prophet; for the prophet is dead,—and unpitying heaven, in a commanding tone, exclaims:—"Cease to call upon me. Ye are yourselves the authors of your calamities; therefore, remedy them yourselves. Nature has established laws; it is your duty to put them in practice. Examine, reflect, and profit by experience. It is the *folly* of man that works his destruction; it is his *wisdom* that mus save him. The people are blindly ignorant; let their minds be enlightened by instruction:—their chiefs are depraved; let them reform and new-model their conduct: for, thus speaks the decree of NATURE:—"*Since the evils that embitter and afflict society, have their source in* IGNORANCE *and* AVIDITY, *men will never cease to be burthened with grievances, until wisdom and intellectual improve-*

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chief, and for forty years these chiefs were in a constant state of war. In this view the Turks do not say without reason: "Ten years of a tyrant are less destructive than a single night of anarchy."

ment shall have illuminated and enlarged the clouded horizon of their understandings, and they shall have learned to practise the art of justice, founded on the knowledge of their relative connections, and the genuine laws of their own organization."

CHAP. XIII.

WILL THE HUMAN RACE EVER BE IN A BETTER CONDITION THAN AT PRESENT?

PIERCED with heartfelt sorrow at the predictions of the Genius, and deeply impressed with the rigorous harshness of his reasoning: "Alas!" cried I, bursting into tears, "What woes betide you, ye devoted nations! What agonies of thought am I doomed to feel, unhappy mortal! Farewell, a long farewell to all my ripening hopes! I now totally despair of the felicity of man! since his afflictions have their source in his own heart, since he himself alone can apply the remedy, nothing but lasting misery awaits his existence! For, who or what can restrain the inordinate desire of the strong and powerful? Who shall enlighten the ignorant minds of the weak? Who instruct the multitude in the knowledge of its rights, and force the chiefs to discharge the duties of their station? What else can we see before us but fell misery, gaping upon us with open jaws, and ready to swallow up the whole human race! While individual will not cease to oppress individual, one nation to attack another nation, never, no, never will the day of glory and prosperity again dawn upon

these countries! Conquerors will come; will drive away the oppressors, and establish themselves in their place; but succeeding to their power, they will also succeed to their rapacity, and the earth will have changed its tyrants, without changing the proportion of tyranny."

Then, turning towards the Genius, and addressing him: "Despair," said I, "heart-rending despair racks my very soul, and preys upon my vitals. When I meditate on the prospects you have opened to me relative to the nature of man—the *depravity of those who govern*, and the *degradation of those who are governed*, make me weary and disgusted of life; and, since there is no alternative but to be either the accomplice or the victim of oppression, what is there left for the virtuous man to do, but to mix his ashes with those of the dead?"

The Genius, fixing upon me an awe-inspiring look of severity, tinged with compassion, continued expressively silent; and, after a solemn pause, replied:—"It is then in dying, forsooth, that virtue consists! And so the base and evil-intentioned demon of society is to be indefatigable and unmolested in the prosecution of his criminal projects, and the man of integrity and virtue is to shrink at the shadow of the first obstacle that stands in the way of his duty, or that thwarts his plans of doing good! . . . . Such, however, is the nature of the human heart: it is elated and intoxicated even to a pitch of presumption by success, and, in an equal degree, dispirited and dejected by disappointment. Always wedded to the sensation of the moment, it is guided in its judgments, not by the nature of things, but

by the extemporary impulse of passion. . . . Thou disconsolate mortal, who thus despairest of the human race, say, upon what profound calculation, upon what induction of facts or chain of reasoning, hast thou built thy gloomy speculations? Hast thou investigated the organization of the sensible power, so as to determine with precision, whether the attractive force, by which it is made to gravitate towards happiness, be naturally weaker than the repulsive force, by which it is made to recede from it; or rather, intellectually grasping, at one view, the general history of the species, and judging of the future by the example of the past, has thou been able to ascertain that all further advancement or proficiency is impossible? Have societies, let me ask, never since their origin made any step towards instruction and a better state of things? Are men still tenants of the woods, destitute of every thing, and buried in the most abject ignorance and ferocious stupidity? Are there no nations that have progressed in improvement beyond the period, when nothing was to be seen upon the face of the globe but savage freebooters or savage slaves? If individuals have, at certain times and in certain places, promoted and meliorated their condition, why should not the whole race do the same? If particular societies have attained to a very exalted degree of perfection, why should not the general progress of society at large advance? And, if the first obstacles have been overcome, why should succeeding ones be insurmountable?

"But, thy imagination is haunted with the ghostly conceit, that the human race is degenerating. Guard thyself, I beseech thee, against the illusion and para-

doxes of the misanthropist. Man, discontented with the present, attributes to the past a perfection which has no existence but in the gaudy dreams of his own fancy, and which he employs, as a kind of specious colouring, to mask and shade his own chagrin. He praises the dead out of hatred to the living, and chastises the children with the bones of their fathers.

"To establish the chimerical notion of a retrogressive perfection, we should have to give the lie to the testimony of facts and reason. Nor is this all; for, supposing the facts, founded upon history, to be disputable or equivocal, we should have to falsify and disprove the living fact of the nature and organization of man; we should have to demonstrate, that he is born with a complete scientific use of his senses; that, antecedent to experience, he is capable of distinguishing poison from wholesome aliment; that the sagacity of the infant is greater than that of the aged and grey-headed veteran in life; that the blind can both walk and knows the way better, than one who is possessed of the greatest acuteness of vision: that man, in a state of civilization, enjoys a less share of happiness than the most unpolished and barbarous cannibal: in a word, that there is no such thing existing as a progressive scale of experience and instruction.

"Young man, the venerable tombs and monuments bespeak thy most serious attention; listen to the incorruptible and disinterested voice of their testimony, and believe. Now, there are countries beyond doubt, which have declined and fallen off from what they were at certain æras: but, if the understanding would be at the pains to analyse and thoroughly examine into the

wisdom and felicity of their inhabitants at those periods, their glory would be found to have more of show than reality; it would be seen, that even in the most celebrated of the states of antiquity, there existed enormous vices and cruel abuses, which were the efficient causes of their frailty and instability; that, in general, their principles of government were really atrocious; that there raged betwixt people and people audacious robberies, barbarous wars, and implacable animosities;* that natural right was a thing, respecting which they were profoundly ignorant; that morality was perverted by senseless fanaticism and deplorable superstition; that a dream, a vision, or an oracle, were perpetually occasioning the most terrible and extensive commotions. Nor are nations, perhaps, yet radically cured of the whole of these maladies; but the virulence of their symptoms has, at least, abated, and the practical experience of past times has not been wholly lost upon posterity. Within the three last centuries especially, the sphere of knowledge has been greatly enlarging both in lustre and extent; civilization, aided by a happy concurrence of circumstances, has perceptibly advanced, and even inconveniences and abuses of a most unpropitious aspect, have proved advantageous to it: for, if conquests have extended kingdoms and states beyond due bounds, the people of different countries, uniting under the same yoke, have lost that selfish spirit of nationality, that estrangement and separation of interests, which made them enemies one to another. If the power has been concentrated in fewer

* Read the history of the wars of Rome and Carthage, of Sparta and Messina, of Athens and Syracuse, of the Hebrews and the Phœnicians: yet these are the nations of which antiquity boasts as being most polished.

hands, there has been an additional degree of system and harmony in the exercise of it. If wars have become more immense in the gross, they have been less murderous and destructive in detail. If the people have carried to the combat less personality and energy, their struggles have not been so sanguinary and desperate. If they have been less free, they have been less turbulent; if more effeminate, they have been more pacific. Even despotism itself has turned to their account: for, if governments have been more absolute, they have not been so disorderly and tempestuous; if thrones have been held as hereditary property, they have excited less dissention, and exposed the people to fewer convulsions; in fine, if despots; by their jealous and mysterious policy, have precluded all knowledge of their administration, and all personal and ambitious rivalship for the official direction of affairs, the passions of mankind, shut out from the scene of politics, have expended their attention on natural science and the arts. Hence the sphere of ideas of every description has been enlarged; and man, by devoting his mind to abstract studies, has understood and perceived, with much greater accuracy, his place in the system of nature, and his social relations. Hence, principles have been more fully discussed, the main points more correctly defined, knowledge has become more widely diffused, individuals better informed, manners more affable, and life itself enhanced by greater suavity and benevolence: and hence the species, upon the whole, especially in certain countries, has been evidently a gainer. Nor can this thriving spirit of improvement fail to proceed, since the two principal ob-

stacles, which have hitherto rendered it so slow and frequently retrogressive, namely, the difficulty of transmitting ideas from age to age, and of communicating them expeditiously from man to man, have been at length completely removed.

"Now, among the people of remote antiquity, every canton and every city, by the *difference* of its *language*, stood unconnected and aloof from the rest, and the consequences resulting from thence became peculiarly favourable to ignorance and anarchy. Thus, there was no communication or interchange of ideas, no participation of discoveries, no harmony of interests or of wishes, no unity of action or of conduct. Besides, as they had no other means of diffusing and transmitting their ideas, but either *orally by speech, which was fugitive in its nature and limited in its extent, or by manuscripts, which were necessarily slow of execution, expensive, and, from their rarity, within the reach of very few*, there lay, of course, immense obstacles in the way of instruction for the time being,—experience became lost from one generation to another,—every thing was in a constant state of fluctuation,—knowledge, instead of advancing, took a contrary course,—and nothing was to be seen but a perpetual succession of blind confusion and childhood.

"On the contrary, in the modern world, and particularly in Europe, from great nations having allied themselves by a kindred of language, opinions became common among large bodies of men; their minds approached within a nearer point of contact; their hearts warmed and expanded; their feelings and ideas vibrated in mutual harmony; and a consonance in thinking

begot a unison of action. At length, *that sublime invention, that immortal gift of genius, the art of printing*, furnished a means of propagating thought, and of conveying at one and the same instant any idea to millions of the species, and of giving it that permanence and durability, which all the power of tyrants has neither been able to suspend nor abolish. Hence the understanding, by the great influx of instruction, has been progressively enlarging its boundary, and the intellectual atmosphere been growing brighter by the continual accession of light, so as now to afford a solid assurance of the future advancement of our condition. And indeed this advancement of our condition is no more than the necessary effect of the laws of nature; for, by the *law of sensibility*, man has the same invincible tendency to *make himself happy*, as the *flame has to ascend*, the *stone to gravitate*, or the *water to gain its level*. The obstacle in his way is his *ignorance*, which misleads him as to the means to be employed, and betrays him into a false judgment of effects and their causes. But, by dint of experience, he will become enlightened; by the lamp of his own errors he will conduct himself into the right path; and will become wise and good, *because it is his interest to be so*. Ideas will spread their electric influence through nations; different classes of people will be instructed; and science will become universally familiar and popular. By this means all ranks in society will become acquainted with the fundamental principles of individual happiness and of public felicity; they will understand what are their respective relations, their rights, and their duties in the social system; and will no longer be

the dupes of their own craving and selfish desires. They will perceive that *morality is a branch of the science of physics*, composed, it is true, of elements complicated in their operation, but simple and invariable in their nature, as being no other than the elements of human organization itself. They will feel the necessity of being *moderate* and *just*, because it is the advantage and security of each to be so; they will discover, that to covet any enjoyment at another man's expense, is a false notion founded on the calculations of ignorance, because from this naturally result reprisals, enmity, and revenge; and they will learn that dishonesty is therefore the constant effect of folly.

"Thus, individuals will find, that personal happiness is inseparably linked with the happiness of society:

"The weak, that instead of dividing their interests, they ought mutually to unite, because equality constitutes their strength:

"The rich, that the quantity or extent of enjoyment is limited by the constitution of the human organs, and that lassitude follows satiety:

"The poor, that the highest degree of happiness consists in equanimity and peace of mind, combined with the due employment of time.

"And public opinion, reaching kings on their thrones, will oblige them to keep themselves within the bounds of a regular authority:

"Even chance itself will aid the cause of nations, and give them, sometimes, chiefs of no capacity, who, through honest weakness, will voluntarily suffer them to become free; and, sometimes, enlightened chiefs, who will have the virtue to emancipate them. And,

when there shall exist on the earth great national individuals, commonwealths of free and enlightened people, the species at large will undergo the same change and modification with the elements, of which it is composed. Knowledge will gradually spread and communicate from one portion of society to another, till it shall finally pervade and illuminate the whole. By the law of imitation, the leading example of one people will be followed by others, who will adopt its spirit and its laws. Despots themselves, perceiving that they can no longer maintain their power without justice and beneficence, will be urged, both from necessity and rivalship, to soften the rigour of their governments, and thus civilization will become universally predominant.

"Betwixt one nation and another, *an equal balance of power* will be established, which, by obliging them to pay a proper deference to the limits of their reciprocal rights, will put an end to the barbarous practice of war, and compel them *to submit the decision of their disputes to civil arbitration ;** and the whole species will thus become one aggregate society, one and the same family, governed by the same spirit and the same laws, and participating all the felicity, of which human nature is susceptible.

"This great work will doubtless be long in accomplishing, because it is necessary that the same impulsive motion should be communicated to the various parts of an immense body ; that the same leaven should assimilate an enormous mass of heterogeneous

* What is a people ? An individual of the society at large. What a war ? A duel between two individual people. In what manner ought a society to act when two of its members fight ? Interfere and reconcile, or repress them. In the days of the Abbe de Saint-Piere, this was treated as a dream, but happily for the human race it begins to be realized.

elements : but this impulsive motion, will, notwithstanding, go on, until it has finally produced its effect. Already *society at large*, having passed through the same periodical stages as *particular societies* have done, indicates a similar tendency towards similar results. At first the social body, being in a state of total dissolution in all its constituent parts, remained for a long time without cohesion in its members ; and this crisis of popular disunion constituted *its first age of anarchy and childhood*. Divided afterwards into sections of irregular size, as accident or chance directed, under the name of states and kingdoms, it experienced the fatal effects which result from extreme inequality of rank and fortune ; and the *aristocracy of great empires* formed its *second age*. At length, these *privileged* and *dignified personages* disputed with each other for pre-eminence and superiority, and this was *the stage or period of intrigue and contending factions*. And, now the parties, tired of their dissentions, and feeling the want of laws, sigh for the arrival of a period of order and tranquility. Let but a virtuous *chief* arise, a *powerful and just people* appear, and the earth will beckon them to supreme dominion. The world looks forward with anxiety for a *legislative people ;* its wishes, its prayers call aloud for such a people, and my heart hears its voice. . . . Then, turning to the westward ; yes, yes, continued he, a shrill kind of sound already vibrates in my ear ; the cry of *liberty*, uttered on the distant shores of the Atlantic, has reached the old continent. At this cry, a secret murmur against oppression begins to manifest itself in a powerful nation ; it feels a salutary alarm for its situa-

tion ; it enquires what it is, and what it ought to be ; it examines into its rights, its resources, and what has been the conduct of its chiefs . . . . Yet, but one day, but one reflection more . . . . and an immense agitation will arise, a new age will burst forth into existence, an age of astonishment to vulgar minds, of surprise and dread to tyrants, of emancipation to a great people, and of hope to the whole world."

CHAP. XIV.

GRAND OBSTACLE TO IMPROVEMENT.

THE Genius paused.—My mind, however, still prepossessed and surcharged with gloomy forebodings, remained a rebel to persuasion ; but fearful of offending him by a contrariety of sentiment, I made no reply. After a short interval, turning towards me and fixing on me a look that pierced my very soul ; "Thou art silent," said he, "and yet thy heart is agitated with thoughts, to which it dares not give utterance !" Trembling with confusion and embarrassment :—"O Genius !" said I, "pardon my weakness : doubtless nothing but *truth* itself can proceed from your lips ; but your celestial intelligence can distinguish all its nicest tints, where my gross faculties are incapable of discerning any thing but clouds and shades. Yet still I must ingenuously acknowledge, that conviction is very far from having taken root in my heart, and I was fearfully apprehensive, lest perchance my *doubts* might give you offence."

"And what is *doubt*," replied he, "that it should be regarded as a crime? Has man the power of feeling or thinking contrary to the impressions that are made upon him? If a truth be palpable, and of practical importance, let us pity the man who is ignorant of it: for, his blindness is a sufficient punishment to him. If it be doubtful and equivocal, how is he to find in it a character or property, which it does not possess? To *believe* without evidence and demonstration is an act of downright ignorance and folly. The man of credulity involves and bewilders himself in an inextricable labyrinth of contradictions and impossibilities; the man of sense, from a sincere love of truth, dispassionately examines and discusses every question, that he may be rationally correct and consistent in his verdict or opinions; he can endure contradiction with the most patient good nature, because it is from the collision of opposite ideas alone, that the light of evidence is produced. Violence and compulsion are the argumentative implements of falsehood; and, to impose a creed or faith authoritatively, is an arbitrary mode of proceeding, characteristic only of a tyrant."*

* Every man is unquestionably bound to exercise his faculties in the discovery of right, and to act according to his judgment of it. Freedom of opinion however has too often been the subject of persecution and punishment. Brute force, has in all countries, been employed in place of argument, as if strength was reason. A war of extermination was avowed against the French nation, because they exercised the sacred right of opinion in politics.

From the time of Constantine till the present, the narrow spirit of intolerance has blasted the happiness and improvement of the human species.

After the conversion of Clovis through all the Heroving:an race, the surface of Europe was drenched with the blood of the Druids, the Roman Polytheists, the Arians, &c.

The wars of Charlemagne during forty years desolated the same quarter of the globe, in order to extend and purify the Christian faith.

Four millions of lives were sacrificed during the Crusades.

The wars of the Guelfs and Gibelines, or Pope and anti-Pope, ravaged Italy, and distracted the greater part of Europe for two centuries. Spain

Emboldened by these sentiments ;—" Well, said I, addressing the Genius, " since my *reason is free*, in vain does it strive to welcome the flattering hope, with which you would console me. A mind, glowing with virtue and sensibility, is prone enough to be hurried away by dreams of fancied happiness ; but a cruel reality incessantly dissolves the enchanting vision, and recalls its attention to suffering and wretchedness. The more I meditate on the nature of man, the more I scrutinize into the present state of society, the less appearance do I see the possibility of a world of wisdom and felicity ever being realized. On surveying the whole face of our hemisphere, no where can I perceive any symptom or likely prospect of a happy revolution. All Asia is buried in the most profound darkness. The Chinese, *governed by an insolent despotism*,* *by strokes of the bamboo, and the ominous ap-*

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expelled the Moors, involved herself in a war of seven hundred years, gained the Inquisition, suffered depopulation, and destroyed millions of the natives of South America for the good of their souls, in her endeavour to convert them.

The religious opinions of Luther and Calvin were vainly attempted to be suppressed by fire and sword, whilst the conversion of the Irish Catholics to the Protestant worship has been attempted by armies and penal laws, by slavery and death.

* The emperor of China calls himself the son of heaven. That is of God; for in the opinion of the Chinese, the material of heaven, the arbiter of fatality, is the Deity himself. " The emperor only shows himself once in ten months, lest the people, accustomed to see him, might lose their respect: for he holds it as a maxim that power can only be supported by force ; that the people have no idea of justice, and are not to be governed but by coercion." Narrative of two Mahometan travellers in 851 and 877, translated by the Abbe Renaudot in 1718.

Notwithstanding what is asserted by the missionaries, this situation has undergone no change. The bamboo still reigns in China, and the son of heaven bastinades, for the most trivial fault, the Mandarin, who in his turn bastinades the people. The Jesuits may tell us that this is the best governed country in the world, and its inhabitants the happiest of men : but a single letter from Amyot has convinced me that China is a truly Turkish government, and the account of Sonnerat confirm it. See Vol. II. of *Voyage aux Indies*, in 4to.

pearance of fish or counters, crippled by the immutability of their ceremonial and fashionable code, and by the radical impediments in their language so lamely represented by the characters made use of, offer nothing to my view in their untimely and abortive civilization, but a mere race of automata. The oriental Indian, fettered by a load of prejudices, and pinioned down by the inviolable and sacred ties of their *casts*, vegetates in an incurable apathy. The Tartar, whether wandering or fixed, continues the same ignorant and ferocious being, and lives in the very barbarism of his ancestors. The Arab, though endowed with a happy genius, loses his national strength, and the fruit of his domestic virtues, in the anarchy of his tribes, and the jealousy of his families. The African, degraded from the state of man, seems irrevocably devoted to servitude. In the North, I see nothing but base serfs, but *cattle-like* people, the mere play-things of their grand *proprietors*. Ignorance, tyranny, and wretchedness have every where thrown nations into a morbid state of paralytic stupor; and vicious habits, by depraving the natural senses, have even destroyed the very instinct of happiness and of truth. In some countries of Europe, indeed, reason begins to expand and to recover its natural elasticity; but even there, can it be said, that the knowledge of individual minds is common to

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As long as the Chinese shall in writing make use of their present characters, they can be expected to make no progress in civilization. The necessary introductory step must be the giving them an alphabet like our own, or the substituting in the room of their language that of the Tartars: the improvements made in the latter by M. de Lingles, is calculated to introduce this change. See the Mantchou alphabet, the production of a mind truly learned in the formation of language.

those nations at large? Has the policy of their governments been turned to the advantage of the people? And, are not these who call themselves polished, the very people, that, for the three last centuries, have filled the earth with their injustice? Are they not those, who, under the pretext of commerce, have laid India waste, dispeopled a new continent, and who, at present, subject Africa to the most inhuman slavery? Can the birth of liberty be looked for in the bosom of tyrants? And can pure justice be administered by the impure hands of rapacity and insatiate avarice?—O Genius! Whenever I have carried my observations into civilized countries, their illusive wisdom has vanished from my sight. There have I seen riches accumulated in the hands of a few individuals, and the majority of the nation poor and destitute. There have I seen all right and power concentered in certain classes, and the mass of the people passive and precariously dependent. I have seen too the *houses or individual families of princes*, but no *general family or commonwealth of nations*: I have seen the interests of *government*, but no *public* interest, or public spirit. I have seen, that the whole science of those, who command, consisted in *oppressing prudently*; and the refined servitude of polished nations, on that account, only appeared to me the more incurable.

"With one obstacle, in particular, my mind was very sensibly struck. In taking a general survey of the globe, I perceived that it was divided into twenty different systems of religious worship: that each nation had received, or formed for itself a different doctrine, and, by exclusively engrossing the truth to itself, im-

agined every other to be in error. But if, as is the fact, in this disparity of opinion, the majority deceive themselves, and that too from the purest motives of sincerity, it follows that the human mind *as readily imbibes falsehood as truth;* and, in that case, how is it to be enlightened? How are the darling prejudices, that have early taken root in the mind, to be extirpated and weeded out? How is the bandage, which blindfolds the intellectual eye, to be removed, when the first article in every creed, the first dogma of every religion, is *the absolute proscription of doubt, the interdiction of examination, and the abjuration of the right of private judgment?* What step is truth to take in order to make herself known? If she offer herself with the credentials of demonstrative proof, pusillanimous man protests against his conscience, and refuses to admit its evidence.* If she appeal to divine authority, being already prepossessed to the contrary, he pleads a rival authority of a similar kind in favour of his own tenets, and treats all innovation as blasphemy. Thus man, by his determined blindness, rivets the chains of his captivity upon himself, and voluntarily barters away the *freedom of his own reason*, in order to become the sport of his own ignorance and passions, and to remain for ever prescinded from the power of remonstrance or resistance. To extricate the mind from the prejudices with which it is inoculated, and from the bondage, which it has thus passively imposed upon itself, would require nothing less than a miraculous concurrence of the most fortunate circumstances. It would

* The belief of the real presence in the sacrament, the Nicene and Athanasian creeds, are melancholy instances.

be necessary, that a whole nation, cured of the delirium of superstition, should be no longer wedded, or in any shape accessible to the impressions of fanaticism; that, freed from the yoke of a false doctrine, it should voluntarily embrace the genuine system of morality and reason; that it should have the firmness to become at once *bold* and *prudent*, wise and docile; that every individual, being made acquainted with his rights, should have the resolution and integrity not to transgress the limits of his duty; that the poor should know how to resist seduction, and the rich the allurements of avarice; that there should be found upright and *disinterested* chiefs: that tyrants should be seized with a spirit of madness and frenzy; that the people, recovering their powers, should be fully apprized of their inability to exercise them, and consent to appoint delegates; that having the creation of their magistrates, they should know how both to judge and to respect them; that, in the sudden renovation and reform of a whole nation living upon abuses, each individual, on being hastily weaned from his former habits, should suffer with patient fortitude the painful privations and self-denials connected with the rapid change; in fine, that the nation should have the resolution to conquer its liberty, the wisdom to secure it, the power to defend it, and the generosity to share it with distributive impartiality. But, can sober reason look forward with any feasible expectation to such an extraordinary combination of circumstances? Or, should the die of fortune, in the infinite variety of chances, happen to produce this very contingency, is it likely, that I should ever live to see that day? And, will not this mortal frame,

long before that, have mouldered away in the grave ?"

Here my heart, convulsed with grief, deprived my tongue of utterance . . . . The Genius made no reply ; —but, I heard him say to himself in a low tone of voice : "Let us revive the hopes of this man : for, if he, who sincerely loves his fellow-creatures, be suffered to despond, what is to become of the nations at large ? The past is, perhaps, but too much calculated to discourage. Let us then anticipate the future ; let us disclose the astonishing age that is about to appear, that virtue, seeing in perspective the distant object of its wishes, and animated with new vigour, may redouble its efforts in hastening its approach."

CHAP. XV.

NEW AGE.

No sooner had the Genius uttered to himself these words, than an immense noise issued from the West ; when, directing my attention to that quarter, I remarked, at the extremity of the Mediterranean, in the country of one of the European nations, a prodigious movement, similar to what exists in the bosom of a large city amid the turbulent storm of sedition, where innumerable crowds of people, like boisterous waves, are driven in tumultuous disorder along the streets and public squares. My ear, struck with their cries, which ascended to the very heavens, distinguished at intervals, these sentences :

"What can be the meaning of this novel and strange phenomenon ? Whence this cruel pest, this latent

scourge? We are a numerous people, and yet we are in want of hands! We have an excellent soil, and yet there is a scarcity of provisions! We are active and laborious, and yet we live in indigence! We pay enormous taxes and imposts, and yet we are told, that they are insufficient! We are externally at peace, and yet our persons and property are not safe even at home! What then, in the name of wonder, can be the secret enemy, that thus devours us?"

Several voices, proceeding from the midst of *the* throng, replied aloud: "Erect a standard in token of distinction, and let all those, who, by their *useful* labours, contribute to the necessary support and maintenance of society, gather round it, and it will not be long before ye discover the latent enemy that preys upon you."

And, on the standard being erected, the nation found itself all on a sudden divided into *two distinct but disproportionate bodies*, the disparity betwixt them affording a striking contrast. The one, *not to be numbered*, and nearly constituting *the whole*, exhibited, in the general poverty of their dress, and in their meagre and swarthy complexions, the evident marks of toil and indigence; the other, a *petty groupe*, and no more, arithmetically speaking, than an insignificant *fraction* compared with the former, presented, in their rich attire glittering with gold and silver, and in their plump and ruddy countenances, the general symptoms and physiognomy of leisure and fortune. On observing these people more attentively, I perceived, that the *large body* was constituted of labourers, artisans, tradesmen, in fine, of every profession, that can be consider-

ed as useful to society; and that in the *small groupe*, there were none but bishops, priests, and clergy of every rank and denomination, officers of the revenue, commanders of troops, men with badges, armorial equipage, and other marks of distinction—in a word, the civil, military, and religious agents of government.

The two bodies, stationed in sight, front to front, eyed one another with astonishment, when I perceived the feelings of indignation and resentment begin to shew themselves in the one, and a sort of panic in the other; and the *large body* said to the *small* one:

"Why do ye stand thus apart from us? Are not ye of our number?"

"No," replied the other; "ye are the *people*; but, we are quite of a different order: we are a *dignified* and *privileged class*; we have separate laws, customs, and rights peculiar to ourselves."

People.—And what species of labour is it, that ye have a share in performing in this society of ours?

Privileged Class.—None: we are not made to labour.

People.—How then have ye acquired your wealth?

Privileged Class.—By taking the pains to govern you.

People.—To *govern* us, to be sure! a pretty kind of *governing* truly! We have the *toil*, and you the *enjoyment*; we *produce*, and you *spend*; wealth flows from the sweat of our brows, and you engross it to yourselves. Go, ye *dignified* and *privileged* who are not of the *people*, go and form a nation apart, and *govern* yourselves.*

* This dialogue between the people and the indolent classes, is applicable to every society; it contains the seeds of all the political vices and disorders

Then, deliberating on their novel and critical situation, some among the groupe said :—"Let us at once join the people, and voluntarily share their burthens and their toils ; for they are surely men as well as ourselves."—Others, on the contrary, rejoined :—"To mix and place ourselves on a level with the common people, would be beyond all measure degrading and vilifying. What ! are they not born to serve us ? and are we not men of a totally distinct blood and superior pedigree ?" And the *civil governors* said : the people are *mild* and *tractable*, and naturally *servile ;* we must speak to them in the name of the *king* and the *law*, and they will shortly return to their duty. . . . *People !* It is the *royal will and pleasure* of our sovereign lord the *King*, he *commands* and *graciously ordains*. . . . ."

People.—The *king* has no will or pleasure of his own, in his political capacity, independent of the safety and welfare of the people ; he can neither command nor ordain but according to the sovereign voice of the law, under which, like ourselves, he is *a subject.*

Civil Governors.—The law calls upon you for submission.

People.—The law is the *general will ;*—and a reformation of abuses is our *will.*

Civil Governors.—Ye are, in that case, a *rebellious* people.

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that prevails, and which may thus be defined ; men who do nothing, and who devour the substance of others ; and men who arrogate to themselves particular rights and exclusive privileges of wealth and indolence. Compare the Mamlouks of Egypt, the nobility of Europe, the Nairs of India, the Emirs of Arabia, the patricians of Rome, the Christian clergy, the Imans, the Bramins, the Bonzes, the Lamas, &c. &c. and you will find in all the same characteristic feature—"Men living in idleness at the expense of those who labour."

People.—Nations never revolt ; tyrants only are *rebels.*

Civil Governors.—The king is on our side, and he enjoins you to submit.

People.—Kings cannot be separated from their respective nations, of which they form a constituent part or member. The king of ours cannot, of course, be on your side ; ye can, therefore, have nothing but his bare shadow to substantiate your pretensions.

Then the *military governors* advanced, and said : "The people are timid ; let us threaten them ; there is no way of bringing them to obedience but by force.... *Soldiers, chastise this insolent rabble!*"

People.—"Soldiers, are not we all of one kindred and children of the same national family? Will you strike your own brethren?—If the people be destroyed, who will support the army?"

And the soldiers grounding their arms, said to their chiefs : "We too are a part of the people ; show us the enemy."

Then the *ecclesiastical governors* said :—"there is now but one resource left. The people are superstitious; we must awe and intimidate them with the names of God and religion."

Priests.—*Our dearly beloved brethren! our faithful children!* God has specially commissioned us to govern you.

People.—Produce the patent of his commission.

Priests.—Ye must have *faith; reason* bewilders and leads men astray.

People.—And would you govern without recourse to *reason?*

Priests.—God is the God of peace;—religion enjoins you to obey.

People.—Peace naturally supposes justice;—and obedience implies the observance of an acknowledged and pre-existent law.

Priests.—Men are only sent into this world for trial and suffering.

People.—Show us then the example by suffering yourselves.

Priests.—Would you live without Gods or kings?

People.—We wish to live without tyrants.

Priests.—Ye cannot do without *mediators* to *intercede* and act in your behalf.

People.—Ye mediators with God, and with kings! Ye *Courtiers* and *Priests!* your services are too expensive;—henceforth we mean to take the management of our affairs into our own hands.

Then the small groupe exclaimed:—*We are lost, it is all over with us; the people is enlightened.*"

And the people replied: "No, no, by being lost, ye are saved; for, since we are enlightened, our power shall not be abused:—our desires extend not beyond our just rights.—Resentment it were impossible not to feel, but we shall now bury it in the grave of oblivion:—we were slaves,—we can now command; but our will only to be free, and, by willing it, we are so."

CHAP. XVI.

A FREE AND LEGISLATIVE PEOPLE.

I NOW began to reflect with myself, that all public authority was suspended and at a stand, that the old government, to which the people were habituated, was annihilated, and I shuddered at the thought of their falling into the dissolution of anarchy. But the immediate promptitude, with which they entered into a discussion of the nature of their situation, quickly dispelled my apprehensions.

"It is not enough," said they, "to have emancipated ourselves from parasites and tyrants, we must guard against the resuscitation and revival of their power. We are but *men*, and we know, by dear-bought experience, that the wishes of every one of us, by the very polarity of our nature and passions, incessantly point towards authority and self-enjoyment at the expense of others. It is, therefore, necessary to provide beforehand against this universal propensity, which is the occasion of so much discord, and to establish *certain rules*, by which our *conduct* may be regulated, and our *rights* determined. But, in the investigation of these, abstruse and difficult questions are involved, which demand the whole time and faculties of every person concerned. Now, occupied as we necessarily are, in our respective callings, we have not sufficient leisure to bestow upon these studies; and even provided we had, we are not competent of ourselves to the exercise of such functions. Let us, therefore, select from among ourselves persons properly qualified for the

task, who shall make it their entire business. Let us *delegate* the powers which we hold in common, to them, in order that they may frame for us a system of government and laws; let us make them the *representatives* of our *interests* and our *wills*: and, that this representation may be as perfect as possible, let the choice be *numerous*, and let them be *citizens* taken out of every class of society *like ourselves*, so as to include a diversity equivalent to that of our wills and our interests."

The selection being made accordingly, the people thus addressed their delegates:—"We have hitherto lived in a *society* fortuitously formed without *fixed terms of agreement*, without free conventional contracts, without any stipulation of rights, without reciprocal engagements; and a multitude of disorders and calamities have been the result of this precarious state of things. After maturely deliberating on these circumstances, we now resolve to frame a regular compact on a well-digested model; and we have made choice of you to draw up the articles of it. Examine, therefore, with care and discreet attention, what ought to be its basis and conditions. Inquire what is the *object* and principles *of every association*; observe well what are the *rights*, which every member brings along with him into it, the powers he *stakes* in the public concern, and the powers which he ought to reserve entire to himself. Point out to us equitable *laws*, and *rules* of conduct. Prepare for us a new system of government; for, we are feelingly sensible, that the principles, which to this hour have been our guide, are radically bad. Our forefathers have wandered in the paths of *ignorance*, and

we, from blind *imitation* and *habit*, have trod in their steps. Every thing is conducted by violence, fraud, and corruption; and the genuine laws of morality and reason are still enveloped in darkness and obscurity. Shed light, therefore, upon this gloomy chaos; discover to us their principles and connective relations, and publish the code, and we will conform to it."

And the people raised an immense throne in the form of a pyramid, and, seating upon it the men they had chosen, said to them; "We elevate you this day above us, that you may take a more comprehensive view of our respective relations, and be exalted above the influence of our passions.

"But, remember that you are our co-citizens and co-equals; that the power, which we confer upon you, belongs to us; that we confide it to you as a trust or deposit, for which you are responsible, but not as personal property, or as hereditary right; that you will be yourselves the first to submit to the laws which you make; that to-morrow you will descend from your station, and stand again on a level with us; and that you will have acquired no right, but the right to our gratitude and esteem. And now only picture to yourselves with what tribute of glory and affection the universe, which reveres *so many apostles of error*, will honour the *first assembly of rational men*, that shall have solemnly proclaimed the immutable principles of justice to mankind, and consecrated, in the very face of tyrants, the rights of nations!"

CHAP. XVII.

UNIVERSAL BASIS OF ALL RIGHT AND ALL LAW.

THESE *men*, *chosen* by the people to investigate the true principles of morality and reason, then proceeded to fulfil the sacred object, with which they were charged; and, after a long examination, having discovered an universal and fundamental principle, they said to their constituents: "We have employed our faculties in the investigation you demand of us, and we conceive the following to be the *primordial basis* and *physical* origin of all justice and of all right.

"*Whatever be the active power, the moving cause that directs and governs the universe, this power, having given to all men the same organs, the same instinctive sensations, and the same wants, has thereby sufficiently declared, that it has also given them the same rights to the use of its worldly favours; and that, naturally speaking, all men are equal.*

"Secondly, inasmuch as this power has given to every man the *full means* of providing for his own existence, it clearly follows, that it has created all men *independent* of each other and *free*, and that no one can be born or made the slave of another, but that all men are the *unlimited proprietors* of their own persons.

"*Equality*, therefore, and *liberty*, are two *essential properties of man*, two *laws* of the *Divinity*, as *inseparable from his nature*, as *irreversible* and *indestructible*, as the physical *properties* of the Elements.

"But, on the ground that every man is the *absolute master* of his own person, it follows, that his own *free*

and voluntary consent is an indispensable condition, that constitutes the very essence of every contract and engagement.

"And, since every individual is *equal* to every other individual, it follows, that the balance of what is rendered back ought to be rigorously in *equipoise* with what is given; for, the idea of *equity* and of *justice* is essentially interwoven in the idea of *equality*.*

"*Equality* and *liberty*, therefore, constitute the physical and unalterable basis of every *union of men in society*, and are, by consequence, *the necessary and generative principle* of every law and regular system of government.†

"It is from having acted in a manner derogatory from this fundamental principle, that those political diseases have crept in amongst you, as indeed they have done in every other nation, which have, at length, awakened and excited you to the remedy of open resistance and revolt. It is only by returning back and new-modelling your conduct conformably with this rule, that you can remove abuses and reconstitute a happy state of social confederation.

"But we are in duty bound to suggest to you, that, from this regeneration, you will have an extreme shock

* The very words (*equipoise, equality, equity,*) evidently trace out to us this connexion: for, *equilibrium, equalitas, equitas*, are all of one family or verbal pedigree, and the *physical* idea of equality, in the scales of a balance, is the source and type of all the rest.

† In the declaration of rights there is an aversion of ideas in the first article, liberty being placed before equality, from which it in reality springs. This defect is not to be wondered at; the science of the rights of man is a new science; it was invented yesterday by the Americans: to-day the French are perfecting it, but there yet remains a great deal to be done. In the ideas that constitutes it there is a genealogical order which, from its basis, physical equality, to the minutest and most remote branches of government, ought to proceed in an uninterrupted series of inferences. This will be demonstrated in the second part of this work.

to endure in your habits, your fortunes, and your prejudices. Contracts of a vicious and injurious tendency must be annulled, abusive privileges abolished, preposterous and partial distinctions, illegitimate and false property of every kind surrendered; in one word, you must return for a moment into the state of nature.—Now, consider well, whether your feelings are capable of consenting to such immense sacrifices."

Thus spoke the representatives:—When, reflecting on the inherent and *greedy passions* of the human heart, I was just on the verge of believing that the people would renounce all thoughts of meliorating *their* condition. But, I was most agreeably mistaken:—for, instantly a vast crowd of men thronged towards the throne, and solemnly abjured all *their riches* and all *their distinctions*.—"Unfold to us," cried they, "the laws of *equality* and *liberty*: we disclaim the future possession of every thing, that is not held in the sacred name of *justice*.

"*Equality, liberty, justice*—these shall be our code hereafter, these shall be the motto, that shall grace our standard."

And immediately the people raised a flag of a most extraordinary size, inscribed with these *three words*, and decorated with *three* corresponding *colours*. This was placed on the throne of the legislators, when the symbol of *universal justice* was, for the first time, seen to wave upon the earth. In front of the throne the people built a *new altar*, on which they placed a pair of golden scales, a sword, and a book, with this legend:—

TO EQUAL LAW, WHICH JUDGES AND PROTECTS.

They then surrounded the throne and altar with a vast amphitheatre, and the nation seated itself to hear the publication of the law. And millions of men, lifting up their hands at the same instant towards heaven, took the solemn oath—"*to live equal, free and just: to respect the rights and property of each other; and to yield obedience to the law, and to its ministers regularly appointed.*"

A spectacle like this, so striking, so awfully sublime, so interesting and moving to a generous heart, melted me at once into tears; and, addressing myself to the Genius, "Henceforth let me live," said I;—"away with despair;—be gone despondence:—for, my hopes are now risen from the dead, and there is nothing in future, which they are not vigilantly prepared to expect."

CHAP. XVIII.

CONSTERNATION AND CONSPIRACY OF TYRANTS.

YET, scarcely had the solemn cry of *liberty* and *equality* resounded on the earth, when symptoms of uneasy astonishment and apprehension were visibly excited in different nations. In one quarter, the multitude, moved by the impulse of desire, but indecisively wavering between hope and fear, between a sense of their rights and the habitual sense of slavery, betrayed active signs of agitation: in another, kings, suddenly roused from the listless yawnings of indolence and despotism, became feelingly alarmed, and trembled for the safety of their thrones: every where those classes of

civil and religious tyrants, who delude princes and oppress the people, were seized with rage and consternation; and, concerting together their perfidious plans, they said one to another: "Woe be to us, should this fatal cry of *liberty* once reach the ear of the multitude, and this poisonous spirit of *justice* be disseminated in their minds." . . . . . And, observing the three-coloured flag with its motto waving in the air: "What a swarm of evils," cried they, "are couched in those three words! If all men be *equal*, where is our exclusive right to honours and power? If all men are or ought to be *free*, what becomes of our *slaves*, our *vassals*, our *patrimony*, our *claims*? If all be *equal* in a civil capacity, where are our privileges of *birth* and *hereditary descent*, and what becomes of the *nobility*? If all be *equal* before God, what occasion will there be for *mediators*, and what is then to become of the *priesthood*? Let us therefore join hand and heart, and without a moment's delay, destroy this hydra of *justice*, and root out the seeds of this noisome *liberty*, lest, by its rapid growth, it become too formidable to be extirpated: and let no expedients, no arts, be left untried to effect our purpose. Let us exasperate and sound the alarm in the ears of kings, that they may take part and coalesce in our cause. Let us divide the people; and, having engaged them in war and bloodshed, let us engross their attention by battles, conquests, and national jealousy. Let us terrify and fill them with apprehensions respecting the power of this free nation. Let us form a grand league against the common enemy. Let us destroy this sacrilegious standard, demolish this throne of rebellion, and quench these kindling combus-

tibles in the outset before the revolutionary flame spreads into a general conflagration."

And the civil and religious tyrants of the people did actually enter into combination together; and having, either by absolute force or seduction, gained multitudes over to their side, they advanced in an hostile manner against the free nation, and surrounding with loud cries *the altar and the throne of the natural law*; "What," said they, "is all this new-fangled heretical doctrine, this impious altar, this sacrilegious worship? . . . . Ye true-believing and loyal people! Would it not seem, that this very day truth was for the first time discovered, and that to this hour ye have known nothing else but error? Would ye not suppose these men to be more particularly favoured by fortune than yourselves, and to have alone the privilege of being wise? And are you, ye *dupes of national rebellion*, so stupidly blind, as not to see how basely your chiefs are misleading you, and how dreadfully they *are adulterating the principles of your faith, and overturning the religion of your forefathers*? Tremble, ye factious spirits, lest the wrath of heaven be kindled against you; and hasten by a speedy repentance to correct and make atonement for your past misdeeds."

But, alike inaccessible to the suggestions of persuasion and of terror, the free nation continued perfectly mute: and, the whole mass appearing all in arms, displayed itself in an attitude, at once both striking and formidable.

And the legislators, addressing themselves to the *chiefs of nations*, said: "If the light, even when *our eyes were hood-winked*, did not fail to illuminate our

steps, why, since the bandage over them is removed and we enjoy so large a field of vision, should we not conceive ourselves to be in a total eclipse of darkness. If we, who, in the capacity of leaders, direct mankind to exert their faculties and to become enlightened, deceive and mislead them, under what construction is the conduct of those to be viewed, who wish only to be *the* leaders of the *blind?*—Ye chiefs of nations, if ye really possess truth, produce it and let us see it, and we will receive it with gratitude; for, we pursue it with ambitious ardour, and feel personally interested in the discovery of it. *We are*, indeed, *but men*, and may accordingly be deceived; Ye too are but men, and, as such, *equally* fallible with ourselves. Assist us then in extricating our minds from this dismal labyrinth, in which the human species has wandered for so many ages, and from the illusion of such a multiplicity of prejudices and evil habits. Engage with us, amid the conflict of contending opinions which are struggling with each other for our belief and acceptance, in order to trace out the genuine and distinctive character of truth. Let one day terminate the long and tedious litigations of error: let us establish between it and truth a solemn competition; and let us invite people of all countries to come forward and give their opinions: Let us convoke a general assembly of nations; let them personally act as judges in their own cause; and, in canvassing the tenets of every separate system, let the field of argument be equally open to the disputants on the side of prejudice and of reason, that every thing may be said for and against each by their respective

champions; and, finally, let the evidence resulting from this discussion, pave the way for an universal harmony of minds and hearts."

CHAP. XIX.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE OF ALL NATIONS.

Thus spoke the legislators of this free people; when the multitude, animated with that sudden and instinctive feeling, which every reasonable proposition tends to inspire, shouted their applause, while the tyrants remained alone, unsupported and overwhelmed with confusion.

A scene of a nature at once both novel and astonishing then presented itself to my view. All the people and nations of the globe, every different race of men from every different climate, advancing on all sides, seemed to assemble in one inclosure, and there to form an immense congress. The motley appearance of this innumerable crowd, distinguishable into groupes by their diversity of dress, of features, and of complexion, exhibited a most extraordinary and engaging spectacle.

On one side, I could distinguish the European with his short and close habit, his triangular hat, shaved chin, and powdered hair; and, on the opposite side, the Asiatic with a flowing robe, a long beard, a shaved head, and circular turban. Here I observed the inhabitants of Africa, their skin of the colour of ebony, their hair woolly, their body girt with blue and white cotton

cinctures, and adorned with bracelets and beads of coral, shells, and glass; there the northern tribes, wrapped in their bags of skin; the *Laplander* with his conical bonnet and his snow-shoes; the *Samoiede* with his body glowing with heat, and surrounded with a strong odorous atmosphere; the *Tongouse* with his horned bonnet, and carrying his idols pendent from his neck; the *Yakoute* with his tatoued skin; the *Calmuc* with his flattened nose and small goat-like eyes. Farther on, were the *Chinese*, attired in silk, with their single tress of hair; the *Japanese* of mingled race; the *Malayans* with large spreading ears, with a ring in their nose, and with an enormous hat of the leaves of the palm-tree;* and the tatoued inhabitants of the islands of the ocean and of the continent which forms our Antipode.† The display of so many varieties of the same species, of so many fantastic inventions of the same kind of understanding, of so many different modifications of the same kind of organization, at once gave rise to a thousand sensations and a thousand thoughts.‡ I viewed with astonishment the gradation of colour,

* This species of the palm-tree is called *Latanier*. Its leaf, similar to a fan mount, grows upon a stalk issuing directly from the earth. A specimen may be seen in the botanic garden.

† The country of the *Papous*, or New *Guinea*.

‡ A hall of costumas in one of the galleries of the Louvre, would in every point of view be an interesting establishment: it would furnish an admirable treat to the curiosity of a great number of men, excellent models to the artist, and useful subjects of meditation to the physician, the philosopher and the legislator. Picture to yourself a collection of the various faces and figures of every country and nation, exhibiting accurately, colour, features, and form: what a field for investigation and enquiry as to the influence of climate, manners, aliment, &c.! It might truly be styled the science of man! Buffon has attempted a chapter of this nature, but it only serves to exhibit more strikingly our actual ignorance. Such a collection, it is said, is begun at Petersburg, but it is said at the same time to be as imperfect as the vocabulary of the three hundred languages. The enterprize would be worthy of the French nation.

from a bright carnation to a bright brown, a dark brown, a muddy brown, bronze, olive, leaden, copper—in fine, even the black of ebony and jet. And, observing the *Kachemirean*, with his rose-coloured cheek, beside the sun-burnt *Hindoo;* and the *Georgian* standing by the *Tartar;* I reflected upon the effects of hot and cold climates, of mountainous and low, marshy and dry, wooded and open grounds. I compared the dwarf of the pole with the giant of the temperate zone; the lank *Arab* with the large pot-bellied *Hollander;* the short squat figure of the *Samoiede* with the tall and well-proportioned form of the *Sclavonian* and the *Greek;* the greasy and woolly black hair of the *Negro* with the silky golden locks of the *Dane;* the flat-faced *Calmuc*, with his goat-like eyes, and his nose crushed, to the oval and projecting visage, the large blue eyes, and the aquiline nose of the *Circassian* and the *Abyssinian*. I contrasted the printed cloths of the *Indian*, the well-wrought manufactures of the *European*, the rich furs of the *Siberians*, with the clothing of savage nations, composed of the platted bark of trees, rushes, leaves, and feathers, together with the blue figures of serpents, stars, and flowers, with which their skin is stained. Sometimes, the variegated appearance of this multitude, reminded me of the enamelled meads of the Nile and the Euphrates, when, after rains and inundations, millions of flowers every where unfold themselves; and, sometimes, it brought to my recollection, by its buzzing noise and busy motion, the innumerable swarms of locusts, which alight in the spring, like a cloud, upon the plains of *Hauran*.

At the sight of so many living and intelligent beings,

I could not help reflecting on the immense multitude of thoughts and sensations which were crowded into this space, and on the consequent opposition that must prevail amid the clash of such a number of different opinions, prejudices and passions of men so whimsically capricious; and, in this train of meditation, my mind was fluctuating in suspense betwixt astonishment, admiration, and fearful apprehension. . . . When the legislators, enjoining silence, diverted the current of my attention wholly to themselves.

"Inhabitants of the earth," said they, "a *free and powerful nation* addresses you in the name of *justice and of peace*, and voluntarily offers, as a security and pledge of its sincerity, the fruits of its experience and conviction. Afflicted for a long time with the same grievances as yourselves, it at length enquired into their origin, and found them to be derived from violence and injustice erected into laws through the inexperience of past generations, and perpetuated by the prejudices of the present age. Accordingly, abolishing every usurped and arbitrary establishment, and going back to the genuine source of reason and of right, it perceived that there existed in the *regular order of the universe*, and in the physical constitution of man, eternal and immutable laws, which only required his observance, in order to render him abundantly happy. O men! only open your eyes, and survey the heavens that afford you light, and the earth that gives you nourishment! Do they not dispense to all of you the same beneficent gifts? and since the *Power that directs their motions* has bestowed on all of you the self-same life, the self-same organs, and the self-same wants,

has it not also given you the same right to the use of its favours? Has it not hereby declared you to be all *equal and free?* What mortal then shall dare refuse to his fellow-creature, the benefit of that which is granted him by nature? O ye fellow-nations of the earth! let us banish from us every kind of tyranny, every unsocial cause of dissension; let us form one individual society, one grand family; and, since all mankind are identified by one species of constitution, let there henceforth exist but one law, that of *nature;* but one code, that of *reason;* but one throne, that of *justice;* but one altar, that of *union.*"

Thus spoke the legislators:—when the multitude rent the very skies with shouts of applause; and, in the midst of this popular transport, a thousand benedictions were heard, and the whole atmosphere resounded with the words, *equality, justice, union.* But different feelings presently succeeded to this first emotion. The chiefs and teachers of the people soon after began to excite a spirit of disputation among them, when there arose a kind of murmur, which spreading from groupe to groupe, was converted into clamour, and from clamour into uproar and disorder of the first magnitude: Every nation assuming exclusive pretensions, and claiming a preference in favour of its own opinions and code.

"Ye are totally lost in error," said the parties, pointing at each other; "we alone are the persons, who are in actual possession of reason and truth: ours is the only true law, the genuine rule of right and of justice, the sole means of happiness and perfection; all other men are either intellectually blind, or downright

rebels in opinion." . . . . And the agitation became extreme . . .

But the legislators, having proclaimed silence, thus addressed them: "People," said they, "by what strange emotion, by what hurricane of passion is it that ye are agitated? What is the meaning of this storm of words, of this boisterous affray of yours, and to what extremities will ye suffer it to lead you? What advantage do you expect to derive from all this strife and contention? For ages has the earth been a field of litigious altercation, and torrents of blood have been shed in order to decide the controversies of mankind: and what benefit have you reaped from so many wars and lamentable contests? When the strong has subjected the weak to his opinion, has he thereby furthered the cause of evidence and truth? O nations! let your own wisdom be your guide and counsellor! When disputes arise between families or individuals, what steps do you take to reconcile the parties? Do you not appoint arbitrators?" "*Yes, yes*," exclaimed the multitude with one *unanimous* voice: "Treat then the authors of your present contrariety of sentiment in a similar manner. Command those who call themselves your instructors, and who impose on you their creed, to discuss in your presence the ground and arguments on which it is founded. Since they appeal to your interests, know in what manner your interests are treated by them.—Again, ye chiefs and preceptors of the people, before ye involve and embroil them in the verbal warfare and jarring hostilities of your rival doctrines, let the reasons for and against your respective opinions be fairly confronted and seriously canvassed. Let us

establish a rational and solemn competition, a public investigation of truth, not before the tribunal of a frail individual or a prejudiced party, but before a court composed of the collective information and united interests of the species at large: and let the *natural* sense of the whole human race be our arbitrator and judge."

CHAP. XX.

INVESTIGATION OF TRUTH.

And the people having shouted their assent, the legislators said: "In order that we may proceed in this grand work methodically and without confusion, let a spacious amphitheatre be formed in the vacant space before the *altar* of *union* and of *peace*; let each system of religion and each particular sect erect its own appropriate and distinctive standard along the circumference; let its chiefs and its ministers place themselves around it, and let their followers be ranged in succession in one and the same line."

And the amphitheatre being traced out, and order proclaimed, an immense number of standards of almost every colour and figure were instantly raised, analogous to what is seen in a commercial port, frequented by a hundred nations, when, on public days of festivity, thousands of flags and pendants stream from a forest of masts. And, at the sight of this astonishing diversity, I turned round and addressing myself to the Genius: "I had no idea," said I, "that the world

was divided into more than at most a score of different systems of religion, and even then I despaired of a reconciliation of opinions ; but, how can I hope for any pacification or coalition of minds, when I behold thousands of different parties ?"—" These, however," replied the Genius, " are only a part of what exist ; and yet they are disposed to be intolerant." . . .

And, as the groupes advanced to take their stations, the Genius began to point out to me the symbols and characteristic attributes of each, and thus explained to me their meaning :—

" That first groupe," said he, " with a green standard, on which you see displayed a *crescent, a fillet, and a sabre,* is formed of the followers of the Arabian prophet. *To assert that there is a God* (without knowing what he is ;) *to believe in the words of a man* (without understanding the language in which he speaks ;) *to travel into a desert in order to pray to the Deity* (who is every where ;) *to wash the hands with water* (and not to abstain from bathing them in blood ;) *to fast all day* (and to feast in the night ;) *to give alms of their own property* (and to plunder the property of their neighbour :) such are the means of perfection instituted by *Mahomet,* such the holy watch words and rallying signals of his true and faithful followers ; and, whoever refuses to answer to the sacred call, is considered as a reprobate, has the awful anathema denounced against him, and is devoted to the sword. *A God of clemency, the author of life,* has, according to them, instituted these laws of oppression and murder ; has instituted them for the whole universe, though he has condescended to reveal them but

to one man; has established them from all eternity, though they were promulgated and made known by him only the other day. These laws are sufficient for all the purposes of life, and yet a volume is annexed to them; this volume was to diffuse light, to exhibit evidence, to be the source of perfection and happiness; and yet, in the very life-time of the prophet, its pages, every where abounding with obscure, ambiguous, and contradictory passages, required elucidation; and the commentators who undertook to explain and interpret them, not agreeing in opinion, became divided into sects and parties opposite and inimical to each other. One maintains that *Ali* is the true successor, and another takes the part of *Omar* and *Aboubekre*. This denies the *eternity* of the *Koran*, that the necessity of ablutions and prayers. The *Carmite* proscribes pilgrimage, and allows the use of wine; while the *Hakemite* preaches the doctrine of the transmigration of souls;—and thus there are sects to the number of seventy-two, of which you may count the different standards.* In this conflict, each exclusively laying claim to infallibility, and stigmatizing the rest with heresy and rebellion, has turned against them its sanguinary zeal. And this religion, which professes to adore a beneficent and merciful God, the common parent of the whole human race, by being converted into a torch of discord and an incentive to war and carnage, has never ceased for these twelve hundred years to deluge the earth with blood, and to spread havock and desolation from one extremity of the ancient hemisphere to the other.†

* Mussulmen enumerate in common seventy-two sects; but I read, while I resided among them, a work which gave an account of more than eighty, all equally wise and important.

† Read the history of Islamism by its own writers, and you will be con-

"The men you see distinguished by their immense white turbans, their large sleeves and long rosaries, are the *Imans*, the *Mollas*, and the *Muftis*; and not far from them are the *Dervises* with their pointed bonnets, and the *Santons* with their hair loose and dishevelled. Observe how they utter with vehemence their several professions of faith, and are beginning to dispute respecting the *greater* and *lesser pollutions*; the matter and form of *ablutions*; the attributes and perfections of God; the *Chaitan* and the good and evil angels; death; the resurrection; the *interrogatory* in the grave; the *passage over the bridge no broader than a hair*; the *balance of works*; the pains of hell, and the joys of paradise.

"By the side of these, that still more numerous groupe, with standards of a white ground interspersed with crosses, consists of the worshippers of *Jesus*. Acknowledging the same God as the Mussulmen, founding their belief on the same books, and admitting, like them, a first man, who entailed mortality on the whole human race by eating an apple, they are nevertheless inspired with a holy horror against them; and, out of *piety*, these two sects mutually treat each other as *impious* impostors and blasphemers. The chief point on which their dissension hinges, is, that after admitting the *unity and indivisibility* of God, the Christians notwithstanding go on to divide him into *three* distinct persons, making of each *an entire and complete*

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vinced that one of the principal causes of the wars which have desolated Asia and Africa, since the days of Mahomet, has been the apostolical fanaticism of its doctrine. Cæsar has been supposed to have destroyed three millions of men. It would be interesting to make a similar calculation respecting every founder of a religious system.

individual, and yet insisting at the same time, that these *three separate individuals* make *one whole, identical and inseparable individual:* and they further add, that this *invisible* Being, who *fills the universe*, assumed the *visible* form of a *man*, with material, mortal, and finite faculties or organs, without ceasing to be immaterial, immortal, and infinite. The Mussulmen, on the contrary, not able to comprehend these *mysteries*, though they find no sort of difficulty in conceiving the eternity of the Koran, and the mission of the prophet, condemn them as fabulous absurdities, and reject them as the visions of a disordered brain. And hence results the most implacable enmity betwixt the two.

"Moreover, the Christian sects, equally divided among themselves, are not less numerous than those of the Mussulman religion; and their bickerings and controversies are the more violent, from the objects for which they contend being inaccessible to the senses, and, of consequence, incapable of demonstration, so that the opinions of each have no rule to go by, no foundation to stand upon, but their own will or caprice. Thus, agreeing, that God is an *incomprehensible* and *unknown* being, they nevertheless dispute respecting his essence, his mode of acting, and his attributes: Agreeing, that his transformation, as they suppose, into man is an enigma that the human understanding is incapable of solving, they dispute respecting the confusion or the distinction of *two wills* and *two natures*, the *change of substance*, the *real* or *fictitious presence*, the *mode of incarnation*, and the like.

"Hence have sprung up innumerable sects, of which two or three hundred have already perished, and

of which three or four hundred others still exist, and are represented by that multitude of colours or ensigns, among which your sight is bewildered. The first in order, which is surrounded by that groupe so grotesque and fantastic in their attire, with red, purple, black, white, and variegated robes, with their heads some distinguished by the tonsure, some with the hair cut short, and others wholly bald, with red hats, square caps, mitres, and long beards,* is the standard of the Roman pontiff, who, by conferring on the priesthood the pre-eminence of his city in a civil view, has erected his *supremacy* into a point of religion, and made of his pride an article of faith.

"Again, on the right, you see the Greek pontiff, who, tenaciously proud of the opposition and rivalship set up by his metropolis, comes forward with equal and counter pretensions, and supports them against the Western church, by the superior antiquity of that of the East. On the left, are the standards of two recent chiefs,† who, throwing off a yoke that was become tyrannical, have, by the introduction of their reform, raised altars against altars, and gained half Europe from the Pope. Behind them are the subordinate sects into which these grand parties are again subdivided, the Nestorians, the Eutycheans, the Jacobites, the Icono-

* The same affectation of mystery has been employed by the clergy of all sects and ages, the same spirit which placed the miraculous wands in the hands of the magi, invested Aaron with his robe and girdle, induced the priests of Baal to lacerate and scarify themselves with the knife and scourge, the Corybantes to beat their cymbols, the naked Bacchanals to run about with their thyrses, the Druids to display the misletoe; this same spirit has produced the insignia of the different orders of christian nuns and friars, has decorated the pope and the cardinal with the tiara and the mitre, has put the surplice on the back, the tonsure or wig on the head, the band round the neck, and the censer or chalice in the hands of the priest.

† Luther and Calvin.

clasts, the Anabaptists, the Presbyterians, the Wicklifites, the Osiandrins, the Manicheans, the Pietists, the Adamites, the Enthusiasts, the Friends or Quakers, the Weepers, together with a hundred others,* all of distinct parties, of a persecuting spirit when strong, tolerant when weak, hating each other in the name of a God of peace, forming to themselves an exclusive paradise in a religion of universal charity, each dooming the rest to endless torments in another world, and realizing here the imaginary hell of futurity."

Next to this groupe, observing a single standard of a hyacinth colour, round which were gathered men in all the various dresses of Europe and Asia : "Here," said I to the Genius, "we shall surely find unanimity."—"Yes," replied he, "so it would seem at first sight, under the superficial and casual appearances of the moment : but do you not know what religious system it is ? Then, perceiving in Hebrew characters the monogram of the name of God, and branches of the palm-tree in the hands of the Rabbins : "Are not these," said I, "the children of Moses, dispersed over the earth to this very hour, and who, holding every nation in abhorrence, have been themselves universally abhorred and persecuted ?"—"Yes," replied the Genius, "and it is for this very reason, that, having neither time nor liberty to dispute, they have preserved the appearance of unanimity. But, when they come to be reinstated, no sooner shall they compare their principles, and reason upon their opinions, than they will be

* Consult upon this subject *Dictionarie des Heresies par l' Abbe Pluquet*, in two volumes, octavo ; a work admirably calculated to inspire the mind with philosophy, in the sense that the Lacedemonians taught their children temperance by shewing to them the drunken Helioten.

divided, as formerly, at least into two principal sects,* one of which, taking advantage of the silence of their legislator, and confining itself to the literal sense of his books, will deny every dogma therein that is not clearly expressed, and, on that ground, will reject as the inventions of the *circumcised*, the *immortality of the soul*, its *transmigration* into an abode of happiness or punishment, its *resurrection*, the last judgment, the existence of both good and evil angels, the revolt of a fallen spirit, and all the poetical system of a world to come; and this favoured people, whose perfection consists in cutting off a small bit of flesh——this mere atom of people, that in the multitudinous ocean of mankind is but as a small wave, and which pretends that all things were made for it alone, will, in consequence of their schism, reduce to one half their already trivial weight in the balance of the universe."

The Genius then directed my attention to another groupe, the individuals of which were clothed in white robes, had a veil over their mouths, and were ranged around a standard of the *colour of the orient beams of the dawn*. On this standard was painted a globe, one hemisphere of which was black and the other white. "The fate of these disciples of *Zoroaster*,"† continued he, "this obscure remnant of a people once so powerful, will be similar to that of the Jews. Dispersed, as they are at present, among other nations, and persecuted by all, they implicitly receive without examination or discussion, the precepts that are taught them by the

* The Sadducees and Pharisees.

† They are the Parsees, better known by the opprobrious name of Gaures or Guebres, another world for infidels. They are in Asia what the Jews are in Europe. The name of their pope or high priest is Mobed.

representative of their prophet; but so soon as their *Mobed* and their *Déstours*,* shall be re-established in their former prerogatives, the controversy will be revived respecting the *good* and the *bad principle*, the engagements of *Ormuzd*, the God of light, and *Ahrimanes*, the God of darkness; the literal or allegorical sense of these contests; the *good and evil Genii; the worship of fire and the elements; pollutions* and *ablutions*, the *resurrection of both body and soul*, or *of the soul alone*;† the *renovation* of the present *world*, and the *new one* which is to succeed it. And the *Parsees* will be split into sects, more or less numerous, just in proportion as their families shall have contracted the manners or opinions of foreign nations during their dispersion.

"Next to these are standards which exhibit, upon an azure ground, monstrous figures of human bodies, double, treble, or quadruple, with the heads of lions, wild boars, and elephants, with the tails of fishes, tortoises, &c. These are the standards of the sects of India, who find their Gods amidst the animal creation, and the souls of their kindred in reptiles and insects. These men support asylums for the reception of hawks, serpents, and rats, and look with horror upon their brethren of mankind! They purify themselves with the dung and urine of a cow, and consider themselves as polluted by the touch of a heretic! They wear a

* That is to say, their priests. See, respecting the rites of their religion, Henry, Lord, Hyde and the Zendavesta. Their costuma is a robe with a belt of four knots, and a veil over the mouth for fear of polluting the fire with their breath.

† The Zoroastrians are divided between two opinions, one party believing that both soul and body will rise, the other, that it will be the soul only. The Christians and Mahometans have embraced the most solid of the two.

ed upon them, and are the standards of one *God*, who, under various names, is acknowledged by the nations of the East. The *Chinese* worship him under the name of *Fot* ;* the *Japanese* under that of *Budso* ; the inhabitants of *Ceylon* under that of *Beddhou* ; the people of *Laos* under that of *Chekia* ; the *Peguan* under that of *Phta* ; the *Siamese* under that of *Sommono-Kodom* ; the people of *Thibet* under that of *Budd* and of *La*. All of them, agreeing as to some points of his history, celebrate his *penitent life*, his *mortifications*, his *fastings*, his functions of *mediator* and *expiator*, the enmity of another *God* his adversary, their *conflicts*, and his *ascendency*. But disagreeing respecting the means of recommending themselves to his favour, they dispute about rites and practical services, and the dogmas of their *interior* and of their *public doctrine*. Here you may observe the Japanese *Bonze*, in a yellow robe, with his head uncovered, who preaches the eternity of souls and their successive transmigration into different bodies ; and his contiguous rival, the *Sintoist*, who denies that the soul can exist independently of the senses,† and maintains that it is a mere *effect*, caused by the operation of the sen-

* The original name of this god is *Baits*, which in Hebrew signifies an egg. The Arabs pronounce it *Baidh*, giving to the *dh* an emphatic sound which makes it approach to *dz*. Kempfer, an accurate traveller, writes it *Budso*, which must be pronounced *Boudso*, whence is derived the name of Budsoist and Bonze, applied to the priests. Clement of Alexandria in his stromata, writes it *Bedou*, as it is pronounced also by the Chingulais; and St. Jerome, *Boudda* and *Boutta*. At Thibet they call it Budd : and hence the name of the country called Boud-tan and Ti-budd : it was in this province that this system of religion was first inculcated in Upper Asia : *La* is a corruption of *Allah*, the name of God in the Syriac language, from which many of the Eastern dialects appear to be derived. The Chinese having neither *b* nor *d*, have supplied their place by *f* and *t*, and have therefore said *Fout*.

† See in Kempfer the doctrine of the Sintoists, which is a mixture of that of Epicurus and the Stoics.

sitive organs, with which, as such, it is connected, and with which it perishes, like sounds with the destruction of a musical instrument. There you see the *Siamese*, with shaved eye-brows, and with the *Talipat* screen in his hand,* who recommends alms-giving, expiations, and offerings, and yet believes in blind predestination and implacable necessity. The Chinese *Ho-Chang*, sacrifices to the souls of his ancestors, while his neighbour, the follower of *Confucius*, attempts to discover his horoscope and future destiny by the tossing at random of artificial fishes or counters and the conjunction of the stars.† Observe that infant surrounded by a swarm of priests with yellow garments and hats: he is the *Grand Lama* into whom God of *Thibet* has just passed and become incarnate.‡ He has, however, a rival to share this blessing along with him; and, on the banks of the *Baikal*, the *Kalmuc* Tartar boasts his God, as well as the Tartar of *La-sa*. But, being both unanimous, in this important point, that God can only take up his residence in one human body at a time, they ridicule the gross stupidity of the Braminical Indian, who sanctifies and looks with an eye of reverence upon the dung of the cow, while they them-

* It is a leaf of the Latinier species of the palm tree. Hence the bonzes of Siam take the appellation of Talapoin. The use of this screen is an exclusive privilege.

† The sectaries of Confucius are no less addicted to astrology than the bonzes. It is indeed the malady of every eastern nation.

‡ The Delai-La-Ma, or immense high priests of La, is the same person whom we find mentioned in our old books of travels, by the name of Priester John, from a corruption of the Persian word *Djchan*, which signifies the world, to which has been prefixed the French word prestre or pretre, priest. Thus the priest world and the God world are, in the Persian idiom, the same.

selves consecrate and preserve with no less awe the loathsome excrements of their pontiff.*

Beside these standards, an innumerable multitude of others presenting themselves to our notice : " I should never have done," said the Genius, " were I to detail to you all the different systems of belief, into which nations are split. Here the Tartar Hordes adore, under the emblematical figures of animals, birds, and insects, the *good* and *evil Genii*, who, in subordination to a supreme but listless divinity, govern the universe, and, in their idolatry, exhibit evident traces of the ancient paganism of the western world. You see the grotesque and whimsical dress of their *Chamans*, who, wearing a robe of leather decorated with little *bells* and *rattles*, with idols of iron, claws of birds, skins of serpents, and heads of owls, are agitated with pretended convulsions, and, by magical incantations, evoke the dead in order to deceive the living. There you behold the sable inhabitants of Africa, who, in the worship of their *Fetiches*, present the same opinions. Again, you have the inhabitant of Juda, who adores God under the figure of an enormous serpent, which the swine unluckily regard as a delicious morsel.† Observe the Teleutean who

* In a recent expedition, the English have found certain idols of the Lamas filled in the inside with sacred pastiles from the close stool of the high priest. Mr. Hastings, and Colonel Pollier are living witnesses of this fact, and undoubtedly worthy of credit. It will be very extraordinary to observe that this disgusting ceremony is connected with a profound philosophical system, to wit, that of the metempsychosis, admitted by the Lamas.——— When the Tartars swallow these sacred relics, which they are accustomed to do, they imitate the laws of the universe, the parts of which are incessantly absorbed and pass into the substance of each other. It is upon the model of the serpent who devours his tail, and this serpent is Budd and the world.

† It frequently happens that the swine devour the very species of serpents the negroes adore, which is a source of great desolation in the country. President de Brosses has given us in his history of the *Fetiche*, a curious collection of absurdities of this nature. . . . The Teleuteans, a Tartar na-

dresses the figure of his God in a uniform of all colours, and supposes him to resemble a Russian soldier; also the *Kamchadale*, who finding that things fare ill with him in this world in his own climate, represents God to himself under the figure of a *capricious* and *ill-tempered* old man,* smoking his pipe and seated in his sledge chasing foxes and marterns. In fine you will remark a hundred savage nations besides, who, having none of those ideas which are prevalent among civilized people, respecting God, the soul, and a future state, have no species of worship whatsoever among them, and yet are not the less favoured with the gifts of nature in this religionless state, in which she has created them."

CHAP. XXI.

PROBLEM OF RELIGIOUS CONTRADICTIONS.

THE different groupes having by this time taken their stations, and the noisy buzz of the multitude having subsided into a profound silence, the legislators said:— "Chiefs and instructors of the people! Ye now are sensibly convinced, that the various nations of the globe, in consequence of their living so detached and so remotely situated from one another, have each chalked

tion, paint God as wearing a vesture of all colours, particularly red and green; and as these constitute the uniform of the Russian dragoons, they compare him to this description of soldiers. The Egyptians also dress the God World in a garment of every colour. *Eusebius Præp. Evang. p.* 115, *l.* 3. The Teleuteans call God *Bou*, which is only an alteration of Boudd, and God Egg and World.

* Consult upon this subject a work entitled, *Description des Peuples soumis a la Russe*, and it will be found that the picture is not over charged.

out for themselves a different course, every one pursuing that route, which appeared from the map of its own judgment to lead to truth. But, if there be only one road to it, and if opinions take a contrary direction one to another, it is sufficiently obvious, that somebody must have missed their way. And, if it be found, that so numerous an assemblage of people have swerved from the right path, what person can assure himself, with any ground of confidence, that he has not himself mistaken his way?—Wherefore, let us, in the first place, set out upon our enterprise of discovery by mutually opening the candour of our hearts indulgently to each other, and that too with a serious and philanthropic determination not to be warped or seduced from ourselves in that respect by any motives originating from a discordance or contrariety of opinion.—Let us then advance into the field of investigation, and commence our search after truth, as if we were all entire strangers to it. For, the opinions, that to this hour have governed the nations of the earth, produced by mere hazard, propagated in the shade of obscurity, sanctified and bowed down to without hesitation or scrutiny, and patronized from a love of novelty and imitation, have, by a clandestine operation, nearly usurped the whole of their empire. It is high time, therefore, if they be actually founded in fact, to identify and attest their certainty by a solemn recognition, and thereby to legitimate their existence. Let us accordingly submit them this day to the ordeal of a general and impartial examination :—let every one produce the credentials of his faith :—let the rest give their verdict upon them : and let us acknowledge that to be the only

true belief which can be universally admitted, as such, by the whole human race."

Then, from the order in which they were respectively stationed, the first standard on the left obtained the privilege of opening the discussion :—"There cannot be a shadow of doubt," said they, "that ours is the only true, the only infallible doctrine. In the first place, it is self-evidently revealed by God himself."

"So also is ours," exclaimed all the other standards, "and that too beyond the possibility of a doubt."

"But it is requisite," interposed the legislators, "that we should be told what it is : for, it were impossible to *believe* what we know nothing about."

"Our doctrine," resumed the first standard, "is proved by a numerous train of *facts*, by a multiplicity of *miracles*, by resurrections from the dead, by rivers suddenly dried up, by mountains transported to a distance, and by a crowd of other *facts*, which it would be endless to enumerate."

"We also," cried the rest, "we can adduce miracles in vindication of our faith without number :"—and each began to corroborate and verify their assertions by the most incredible recitals.

"Their miracles," replied the first standard, "are either *the prodigies of a credulous and superstitious imagination*, or wrought by the *demoniacal agency* of the *evil spirit*, who has beguiled them by his deceptions."

"Yours," retorted the others, "yours are the machinations of fancy and superstitious credulity :"—and all, speaking individually of themselves, added : "None

are true ones but our own ; as to all other miracles, they are downright forgeries."

And the legislators said, "Have you any living witnesses to attest them ?"

"No," replied they, "the facts are of ancient date, and the witnesses are long since dead, but they are left upon record in their writings."

"Be it so," said the legislators : "but they be found in direct contradiction to each other, who is to reconcile them ?"

One of the standards, in return, emphatically exclaimed : "Just arbitrators ! as a proof that our witnesses had ocular conviction of the truths in question, they sacrificed their lives in confirmation of them : so that our creed is actually sealed with the blood of martyrs."

"So also is ours," re-echoed the rest : "we can cite the history of thousands of martyrs, who died with the most heroical fortitude, braving the most agonizing tortures, without ever swerving from the faith, or abjuring the truth in a single point."—And the Christians of every sect, the Mussulmen, the Indians, the Japanese, all quoted a numberless catalogue of biographical narratives and memorials of dying confessors, martyrs, penitents, and the like.

And one of the parties having denied the authenticity of the martyrology of their opponents : "Well," cried they, "we are ready to die ourselves in proof of the infallibility of our creed."

And instantly a crowd of men of every sect and religion presented themselves to endure either death or whatever torments might be inflicted upon them. And

numbers of them began to tear their arms, and to beat their heads and their breasts without betraying the least visible symptom of pain.

But the legislators interposing began to remonstrate with them: "O fellow men!" said they, "hear with composure what we wish to submit to your consideration. If you die, in order to prove that two and two make four, will this truth gain additional confirmation by your death?"

"No," exclaimed the groupes with one unanimous negative.

"And provided you die, in order to prove that they make five, will that make them five?"

"No," replied they with the same unanimous voice.

"Well," continued the legislators, "what then does all this persuasion of yours tend to prove, if it make no manner of alteration in the existence of things? Truth is uniformly one and the same;—your opinions are multiform and various; consequently, a considerable number of you must necessarily be mistaken. And, if those, who are in this predicament, can, as is evidently the case, be confidently persuaded of fallacy and error, how can *persuasion* be regarded as demonstrative evidence? Again, if error has its martyrs who sacrifice themselves in defence of it, how is martyrdom a just criterion of truth? If the evil spirit be capable of working miracles, how will you draw a line betwixt him and the Divinity? Besides, why thus continually resort to incomplete and incompetent miracles? Why not rather, instead of these marvellous changes and deviations from the fixed course of nature, miraculously

change the course of opinions? Why murder and terrify men, instead of enlightening and correcting their ignorance?

"O credulous and opinionated mortals! If we are none of us absolutely certain of what passed yesterday, nor even of what is passing this very day before our own eyes, how can we solemnly pledge ourselves for the truth of what happened two thousand years ago?

"Weak and presumptuous men! the laws of nature are invariable and unerringly profound, but our vague and shallow understandings are full of infatuation and vain illusion; and yet we take upon ourselves to comprehend and to resolve every thing that comes in our way. But, in reality, it were much easier for the whole human race to fall into error, than for a single atom to change or forget its nature."

"Well," said one of the reverend sages, "setting aside all evidence built upon facts of this nature, since they may possibly be equivocal, let us attend to the proofs deducible from reason and the intrinsic merit of the doctrine itself."

An *Iman* of the law of *Mahomet*, with a look of confidence, then stepped forward, and having turned himself towards *Mecca*, and uttered with emphasis his *profession of faith*: "*Let God be praised!*" said he, with a grave and solemn accent, "the light shines in all its splendour, and the truth hath no need of examination." Then exhibiting the Koran: "Here," continued he, "is the light and the truth in their very essence! *There is no doubt in this book; it guides without error the man who implicitly believes without the*

*intuitive evidence of his senses, who receives without discussion the divine revelation, which was sent down unto the prophet to save the simple and to confound the wise. God hath appointed Mahomet to be his minister upon earth; he has delivered up the world to him, that he might subdue by his sword such as refuse to believe in his law. The infidels dispute, and will not believe; their obduracy proceeds from God, who hath hardened and sealed up their hearts, that he might deliver them over to the most terrible chastisements."**

Here he was interrupted by a violent murmur proceeding from every quarter. "What man is this," cried all the groupes, "who thus gratuitously insults us? By what right does he pretend, as a conqueror and a tyrant, to impose his creed upon us? Has not God gifted us as well as himself with eyes, with understanding, and with reason? And have we not an *equal* right to make use of them in informing ourselves what we ought to reject, and what to believe? If he has a right to attack, have we not a right to defend ourselves? If he chooses to believe without examination, are we, therefore, not to employ our own judgment in forming a rational belief for ourselves?

"And what is all this *splendid* and *luminous* doctrine which dreads the *light?* What this apostle of a *merciful* God who preaches only *murder and carnage?* What this God of *justice,* who punishes the blindness of which he himself is the cause? If violence and

* This passage contains the sense and nearly the very words of the first chapter of the *Koran;* and the reader will observe in general, that in the sketches that follow, the writer has endeavoured to give as accurately as possible the letter and spirit of the opinions of each party.

persecution be the arguments of truth, must mildness and charity be therefore regarded as the characteristic attributes of falsehood ?"

Then a person from a neighbouring groupe advanced and said to the Iman:—" Well, even admitting Mahomet to be the apostle of a superior doctrine, the prophet of the true religion,—be so obliging as to inform us, which of the two we are to follow in order to practise it—his son-in-law *Ali*, or his vicars *Omar* and *Aboubekre* ?"*

He had scarcely mentioned these *names*, when a terrible schism arose among the Mussulmen. The partisans of *Omar* and of *Ali*, treating each other as *heretics* and *profane apostates*, poured forth against each other a whole volley of maledictions. Their language even became so violent, and the affray so serious at last, that the neighbouring groupes were obliged to interpose, in order to prevent their coming to blows."

At length, when the storm had a little abated, the legislators addressing themselves to the Imans : " Ye now see," said they, " the consequences resulting from your principles ! Were they carried into practice, you would, by your mutual enmity, proceed from one extremity to another, destroying each other till not an individual would be left ; and is it not *the first law of God—to let man live ?* Then addressing themselves to the other groupes : " This exclusive spirit of intolerance," said they, " undoubtedly militates against every idea of justice, and saps the very foundation of morality and of society : would it not, however, be

* These are the two grand parties into which Mussulmen are divided. The Turks have embraced the second, the Persians the first.

proper, before we absolutely reject this doctrinal code, to hear some of its dogmas recited, that we may not partially decide from forms alone without having fundamentally investigated the religion itself?"

And, the groupes acceding to the proposition, the Iman began to explain to them how *God, who beforetime had spoken* to the nations sunk in idolatry *by twenty-four thousand prophets, had at length sent the last, the seal and perfection of all the rest, Mahomet, in whom was vested the salvation of peace:* how to prevent the word of truth from being any more perverted by infidels, the *divine mercy had written with his own hand the leaves of the Koran;* and, expiating upon the dogmas of Islamism, the Iman explained how *the Koran*, by virtue of its being *the word of God, was*, like its divine author, *uncreated and eternal: how it had been transmitted from heaven leaf by leaf in twenty-four thousand nocturnal apparitions of the angel Gabriel;* how the angel announced his approach *by a small clicking noise, which threw the prophet into a cold sweat;* how in the vision of one night, he travelled through *ninety heavens, mounted upon the animal called Borak, one half woman and one half horse:* how, being endowed with the gift of miracles, *he walked in the sunshine without producing any shadow, caused with a single word trees already withered to resume their verdure, filled the wells and the cisterns with water, and split the disk of the moon in two; that, under the authority of a commission from heaven, Mahomet* had propagated, by dint of the sword, a religion *the most worthy of God for its sublimity*, the most suitable for man from the simplicity of

its practical injunctions, as consisting only of eight or ten leading points : such as, *to confess the unity of God ; to acknowledge Mahomet as his only prophet ; to pray five times in the day ; to fast one month in the year ; to pay a visit to Mecca once at least in our lives ; to pay the tenth of all that we possess ; to drink no wine, to eat no swine's flesh, and to make war upon the infidels ;** by which means every Mussulman, becoming himself an apostle and a martyr, would enjoy in this world an infinity of blessings, and at his death his soul, *being weighed in the balance of works*, and his absolution pronounced by the *two black angels*, would pass over *the bridge* extended across the infernal abyss, which is no broader *than a hair, and as sharp as the edge of a sword*, and would be finally received into the *paradise of bliss*, watered with rivers of milk and honey, and embalmed with the perfumes of India and Arabia, where it would live in uninterrupted commerce with those chaste females, the celestial *Houris*, who present an incessantly renewed virginity to the elect, who enjoy a perpetually renovated youth.

This curious relation excited an involuntary smile in the countenance of every one ; and the various groupes, meditating upon these articles of belief, unanimously exclaimed :—" How is it possible for rational beings to have faith in such strange reveries ? Might not one suppose that a chapter had been just read to us from the " *Thousand and One Nights.*"

And a *Samoiede* stepping forward, said :—" The

* Whatever the advocates for the philosophy and civilization of the Turks may assert, to make war upon infidels is considered by them as an obligatory precept and act of religion. See Reland de Relig. Moham.

paradise of Mahomet is in my opinion excellent; but one of the means of arriving at it puzzles me extremely. For, if it be necessary to abstain from meat and drink *between the rising and setting sun, as their prophet ordains,* how is such fasting practicable in our country, *where the sun continues above the horizon for six months together?*"

To vindicate the honour of their prophet, the Mussulmen doctors all flatly denied the possibility of the fact; but a hundred people bearing testimony to the truth of it, the infallibility of Mahomet sustained a violent shock.

"It is a little singular," said a *European*, "that God should have continually revealed what was going on in heaven, without ever having informed us of what was passing upon earth!"

"For my part," said an *American*, "I find an insuperable difficulty in this pilgrimage of theirs. For, let us suppose a generation to be twenty-five years, and the number of males existing on the face of the globe to be a hundred millions: in this case, every one being obliged to travel to Mecca once during his life, there would be four millions of people annually upon the road; and, as it would not be possible for them to return in the same year, the number would consequently be doubled, that is to say, would amount to eight millions. Now, where are there provisions, lodging, water, and vessels to be found sufficient for the accommodation of such a host of *ablutionary* travellers every where on their march?—In fact, miracles must be wrought to surmount such immense obstacles."

"That the religion of Mahomet is not a revelation

from heaven," said a Catholic divine, "is fully proved from a great part of the notions on which it is founded, having existed for a long time prior to its establishment; so that it is nothing more than a confused miscellany of perverted truths, purloined from our holy religion and that of the Jews, which an ambitious individual has made subservient to his own selfish projects of dominion, and his worldly views. Peruse his book, and you will find little else than the histories of the Old and New Testament travestied into the most puerile and absurd tales, and the rest of it a tissue of vague and contradictory declamation, of ridiculous or dangerous precepts.—Again, sift and analyze the spirit of these precepts and the conduct of their apostle: and you will find a shrewd and daring character, which, to carry his own purposes, works with admirable address, it is true, upon the passions of those whom he wishes to govern.—He directs his discourse to simple and credulous men, and fills their minds with pretended prodigies. They are ignorant and jealous, and he flatters their vanity by holding up science as an object of contempt;—they are poor and rapacious, and he inflames their desires by the hope of plunder;—having nothing at first to give them upon earth, he creates treasures in heaven; he makes them long for death as the greatest of blessings; he threatens the cowardly with hell; he promises paradise to the brave; and animates the weak by the notions of predestination and fatality: in short, he produces that zeal and enthusiasm, which he finds requisite for the prosecution of his designs, by every thing that can invite and captivate the senses, by every provocative and allurement that can interest or enlist all or any of the passions in his favour.

"How different the character of the Christian doctrine! and how much does its empire, established on the counteraction of every natural inclination and the extinction of all the passions, prove its celestial origin! How forcibly does its mild, compassionate, and consolatory morality attest its emanation from the Divinity! Many of its dogmas, it is true, soar beyond the reach of the human understanding, and impose on reason a respectful silence: but this very circumstance tends the more fully to confirm and authenticate its origin, since the inventive faculties of man could never of themselves, have attained to such sublime mysteries."—Then, with the *Bible* in one hand, and the Four *Evangelists* in the other, he began to relate; that in the beginning, God (after having passed an eternity without doing any thing) conceived at length the design (without ostensible motive) of forming the world out of nothing: that having in six days created the whole universe, he found himself fatigued on the seventh: that having placed the first human pair in a delicious garden, in order to make them completely happy, he nevertheless forbade them to taste of the fruit of a certain tree which he planted within their reach: that these first parents having yielded to temptation, all their posterity (that was yet to be born) were condemned to suffer the penalty of a fault which they had no share in committing: that, after permitting the human species to damn themselves for four or five thousand years, this God of mercy had ordered his dearly beloved son, engendered without a mother and of the same age with himself, to descend upon the earth in order to be put to death, and that too (without his being known but to

mere handful of people) for the *universal* salvation of mankind, the major part of which has nevertheless continued to march on in the very same road to perdition as before: that to remedy this additional inconvenience, this God, the son of a woman, who was at the same time both a mother and a virgin, after having died and risen again, is born afresh every day, and, under the form of a morsel of dough is multiplied a thousandfold at the voice and discretion even of the basest of mankind. Having explained these dogmas, he was going on to treat at large of the doctrine of the Sacraments, of the powerful *binding* of the soul by sin, and the *unbinding* of it by absolution, of the means of purifying men from crimes of every sort with a few drops of water and the muttering of a few words; but he had no sooner pronounced the terms *indulgence*, *papal prerogative*, *sufficient* and *effectual grace*, than he was interrupted by a thousand voices at once. "It is a *horrid corruption*," cried the *Lutherans*, to "pretend to sell for *money* the pardon of *sins*." "It is totally inconsistent with the genuine sense and spirit of the gospel, said the *Calvinists*, "to talk of the *real presence* in the Sacrament."—"The Pope," exclaimed the *Jansenists*, "has no power to decide upon any thing of himself."—Thirty sects at once mutually accused each other of heresy and blasphemy, and the clamour and vociferation became at length so great, that it was no longer possible to distinguish a syllable they uttered.

After some time, however, silence was restored; when the Mussulmen, addressing themselves to the legislators, claimed the privilege of being heard:—

"Since you have rejected our doctrine," said they, "as containing things which you deem incredible, can you possibly admit that of the Christians? Is it not infinitely more contradictory to justice and common sense? An *immaterial* and *infinite* God to transform himself into a *man!* To have a son as old as himself! This *Man-God* to become bread, which is eaten and which undergoes digestion! What absurdities, let us ask, have we equal to these? And have these men the *exclusive right* of exacting a blind and implicit obedience to their faith? And will you concede to them such extraordinary theological *privileges* to our detriment?"

Some savage tribes next advanced.—"What," cried they, "because a man and a woman chanced to eat an apple six thousand years ago, is the whole human race to be involved in damnation? And ye talk too of your God being just:—Now, what tyrant ever made children responsible for the sins of their fathers? How can one man be accountable for the actions of another? Would not this be a fatal stab to every principle of equity and of reason?"

"Where," exclaimed others again, "are the witnesses, the proofs of all these pretended facts? Are we to take them barely upon trust without the examination of evidence? The most trivial action in a court of judicature requires at least two witnesses, and are we to believe and take all this for granted upon mere tradition and hearsay?"

A Jewish Rabbin then, addressing the assembly, said: "For the simple facts themselves we are ready to stand vouchers; but, as to the form and the appli-

cation that has been made of those facts, the case is widely different, it being here that the Christians pass the sentence of condemnation upon themselves by the very testimony of their own lips: for, they cannot deny that we are the primitive root and parent stock from which they are religiously descended,—that ours is the sacred trunk upon which their doctrine has been grafted:—whence it follows as an inevitable consequence, either that our law *is* from God, and, if so, then theirs, by deviating from ours, becomes, of course, a heresy; or else that our law is *not* from God, and, in that case, the divinity of theirs sinks along with that of ours, with which it is derivatively and inseparably linked.

"But their is an important line of distinction to be drawn betwixt them," said the Christian, "to which it is necessary to attend. Your law is of God as *typical* and *preparative*, not as *final* and *absolute;* you are but the *shadow*, of which we are the *substance.*"

"We know well," replied the Rabbin, "that such is the customary plea to which you resort in your own defence: but it is a gratuitous and false assumption. Your system rests entirely on *mystical* constructions*, on *visionary* and *allegorical interpretations.* You murder and pervert the letter of our books, you continually substitute for the true sense and genuine acceptation of a passage the most preposterous and romantic conceits of your own, and discover in them whatever is most agreeable to your fancy, just as a roving imagination discovers the figure of different things in the

* When we read the fathers of the church and see upon what arguments they have built the edifice of religion, we are inexpressibly astonished with their credulity or their knavery: but allegory was the rage of that period, the Pagans employed it to explain the actions of their Gods, and the Christians acted in the same spirit when they employed it after their fashion.

clouds. . . . . Thus, you have feigned a *spiritual Messiah*, where our prophets speak only of a *political king*. You have construed into a redemption of the human race, what expressly and solely refers to the re-establishment of our nation. Your pretended conception of the virgin is grounded upon a phrase which you have forcibly and unnaturally wrested from its true meaning. And thus you ramble on at pleasure in the fairy-land of your own imagination, conjuring every thing by exposition into whatever import is most convenient for your purpose. Nay, you even manage to detect in our books your doctrine of the *Trinity*, though they contain not the most indirect allusion to it, being a prevalent notion among profane nations, and admitted into your system of religion together with a multitude of other opinions of every worship and sect, out of which it was fabricated during the chaos and anarchy of the three *first ages*.

At these words, foaming with indignation, and bellowing out—*profaneness*—*blasphemy*,—the Christian ecclesiastics felt disposed to lay violent hands upon the Jew: and a motly host of monks, dressed in black and white, advancing with a banner on which *a pair of pincers*, *a gridiron*, and *a pile of faggots*, together with the words, *justice*, *charity*, and *mercy*, were painted,* cried out: "It is absolutely incumbent upon us to make a *religious* example, an *act of faith* of these *impious* heretics, and to burn them alive for the glory of God." And they had actually planned out the scene of torture, when the Musselmen in a strain of irony exclaimed: "Such forsooth is the religion of *peace*,

* Such is the real ensign of the Inquisition of *Spanish Jacobins*.

whose *humble*, *humane*, and *gentle* spirit ye have so loudly vaunted! Such that *evangelical charity* which combats *incredulity* with no other weapon than that of *meekness*, and opposes only *patience* to *injuries!*—O ye high-sounding but double-hearted hypocrites! and so it is thus ye deceive nations—it is thus ye have propagated your poisonous and destructive errors! When weak, ye have preached up *liberty*, *toleration* and *peace;* when powerful ye have practised *violence* and *persecution!*" . . . . And they were proceeding to give an historical detail of the bloody wars and murders of the *Christians*, when the legislators, proclaiming silence, gave a check to these jarring effusions of irascibility and resentment.

"It is not," replied the particolored monks, in a tone of affected meekness and humility, "it is not in behalf of ourselves that we demand vengeance; it is the cause and glory of God that we have alone at heart, and which we feel ourselves called upon in his name to defend."

"And what right have *you*," said the *Imans*, "*to make yourselves his representatives* more than *we have*? What *privileges*, in the name of wonder, have you to value yourselves upon on that score, which we have not also? Are you a different order of human beings from ourselves?"

"To presume to *defend God*," said another groupe, "or to avenge his cause, is a downright insult upon his wisdom and omnipotence. Does he not know what becomes his own dignity better than men?"

"Certainly," rejoined the monks; "but his ways are secret."

"That you enjoy the exclusive privilege of comprehending them," said the Rabbins, "is, however, a problem, which we defy you even to demonstrate."—And the Jews, proud of finding supporters who leaned towards their cause, were willing to flatter themselves with the idea that the books of *Moses* would be triumphant; when the *Mobed** of the *Parsees* came forward to speak:—

"We have heard," said he to the legislators, "the account of the Jews and Christians respecting the origin of the world, and, though prodigiously altered and disfigured, yet, it evidently contains a number of facts which our religion admits; but we solemnly protest against the idea of their having originated with the Hebrew legislator. It was not he who made known to mankind these sublime dogmas and celestial occurrences; it was not to him that God revealed them, but to our holy prophet *Zoroaster;* and unquestionable proofs of this are legible on the very face of their own books. For, if you examine with attention the detail of laws, of ceremonies, and of precepts established by *Moses,* you will no where find the most tacit indication of what constitutes at present the basis of the *Jewish* and *Christian* theology. You will not discover a single trace either of the *immortality* of the soul, or of a *future state,* or of *hell* and *paradise,* or of the *revolt of the principal angel, the author of all the evils which have befallen the human race, &c.* These notions were unknown to *Moses,* and the reason of this is obvious and peremptory, because it was not till four

* High Priest.

hundred years after his time that they were broached and promulgated by *Zoroaster* in Asia."*

The *Mobed* further added, addressing himself to the *Rabbins*:—"It was not till after this æra, that is, till after the age of your first kings, that these notions appeared in your writings; and even then they found their way into them but by degrees, and stole into them imperceptibly at first, owing to the political relations subsisting between your ancestors and ours. It was more particularly at the period when your progenitors, conquered and dispersed by the kings of Nineveh and Babylon, resorted to the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, and by residing in our country for three successive generations, imbibed and became impregnated with our manners, and opinions, which before-time they had regarded with aversion, as contrary to their law. At the time when our king, *Cyrus* delivered them from slavery, their hearts glowed with gratitude towards us; they became our proselytes and imitators, and introduced our doctrines into their sacred books at the time they new-modelled and reformed them,† for your *Genesis*, in particular, never was the work of *Moses*, but a compilation digested on the return from

* See the Chronology of the Twelve Ages, in which I conceive myself to have clearly proved that Moses lived about 1400 years before Jesus Christ, and Zoroaster about a thousand.

† In the first periods of the Christian church, not only the most learned of those who have since been denominated heretics, but many of the orthodox, conceived Moses to have written neither the law nor the Pentateuch, but that the work was a compilation made by the elders of the people, and the Seventy, who after the death of Moses, collected his scattered ordinances, and mixed with them things that were extraneous: similar to what happened as to the Koran of Mahomet. See *Les Clementines* Homel. 2, sect. 51, and Homel. 3, sect. 42.

Modern critiques, more enlightened or more attentive than the ancients, have found in Genesis in particular, marks of its having been composed on the return from the captivity; but the principal proofs have escaped them.

the Babylonish captivity, in which the Chaldean opinions respecting the origin of the world were inserted.

"At first, the pure followers of the law, opposing the emigrants by recalling their attention to the pure letter of the *text*, and to the absolute silence of the *prophet* touching the points in question, endeavoured to counteract these innovations; but our doctrine notwithstanding, finally prevailed, which being modified according to your peculiar taste and ideas, gave rise to a new sect. You looked for a *king*, the *restorer* of your political independence: we announced a *God*, the *regenerator* of the world, and the *saviour* of mankind. The combination of these ideas constituted the tenets of the *Essenians*, and through them became the basis of *Christianity*. And whatever may be your suppositions or pretensions, ye Jews, ye Christians, and ye Mahometans, ye are, with regard to your *system of spiritual beings*, no more than the blundering followers of *Zoroaster!*"

Then the *Mobed* began to give an outline of the articles of hir own religion, and supporting his observations by quotations from the *Sadder* and the *Zènd-avesta*, recounted in the same order as they are found in the book of *Genesis*, the creation of the world in

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These I mean to exhibit in an analysis of the book of Genesis, in which I shall demonstrate that the tenth chapter, among others, which treats of the pretended generations of the man called Noah, is a real geographical picture of the world, as it was known to the Hebrews at the epoch of the captivity, which was by Greeco or Hellas at the West, mount Caucasus at the North, Persia at the East, and Arabia and Upper Egypt at the South. All the pretended personages from Adam to Abraham or his father Terah, are mythological beings, stars, constellations, countries. Adam is Bootes: Noah is Osyris, Xisuthrus Janus, Saturn; that is to say Capricorn, or the celestial Genius that opened the year. The Alexandrian Chroniele says expressly, page 85, that Nimrod was supposed by the Persians to be their first king, as having invented the art of hunting, and that he was translated into heaven where he appears under the name of Orion.

*six gahans** the formation of a first man, and a first woman in a celestial abode, under the *reign of good;* the introduction of *evil* into the world by the *great snake, the emblem of Ahrimanes;* the revolt and conflicts of this *maleficent* genius of *darkness* against *Ormuzd* the *beneficent* God of *light;* the distribution of angels into *white* and *black, good* and *evil;* the various orders of their hierarchy consisting of *cherubim, seraphim, thrones, dominions,* &c.; *the end of the world at the close of six thousand years; the coming of the Lamb, the regenerator of nature; the new world; a future life in a place of happiness or misery; the passage of souls over the bridge across the abyss;* the ceremonies in the mysteries of *Mythras;* the *unleavened bread* eaten by those who were initiated therein; the *baptism of new-born infants;* the *unction* of the *dead,* and the *confession of sins*† ; in

* *Creation of the world in six gahans,* or periods, or into six gahanbars, that is six periods of time. These periods are what Zoroaster calls the thousands of God or of light, meaning the six summer months. In the first, say the Persians, God created (arranged in order) the heavens; in the second the waters; in the third the earth; in the fourth trees; in the fifth animals; and in the sixth man; corresponding with the account in Genesis. For particulars see Hyde, ch. 9, and Henry Lord, ch. 2, on the religion of the ancient Persians. It is remarkable that the same tradition is found in the sacred books of the Etrurians, which relate that the fabricator of all things had comprised the duration of his work in a period of twelve thousand years, which period was distributed to the twelve houses of the sun. In the first thousand, God made heaven and earth; in the second the firmament; in the third the sea and the waters; in the fourth the sun, moon and stars; in the fifth the soul of animals, birds and reptiles; in the sixth man. See Suidas, or the word Tyrrhena; which shows first the identity of their theological and astrological opinions; and secondly the identity, or rather confusion of ideas, between absolute and systematical creation, that is the periods assigned for renewing the face of nature, which were at first the period of the year, and afterwards the periods of 60, of 600, of 25,000, of 36,000, and of 432,000 years.

† The modern Parses and the ancient Mithriacs, who were the same sect, observe all the Christian sacraments, even the laying on of hands in confirmation.—"The priest of Mithra," says Tertullian, (de Præscriptione, ch. 40.) promises absolution from sin on confession and baptism; and, if I rightly remember, Mithra marks his soldiers in the forehead (with the chrism,

a word, he repeated so many articles analogous to those of the three religions already alluded to, that his discourse seemed to be a commentary or a continuation of the *Koran* and the *Apocalypse*.

But the Jewish, Christian, and Mahometan Divines vehemently protested against this statement, and treating the *Parsees*, as idolaters and *worshippers of fire*, charged them with falsehood, forgeries, and a spurious representation of facts. And there arose a violent dispute respecting the periodical dates of events, their chronological order and succession, the genuine origin of opinions, their transmission from one people to another, the authenticity of the books on the authority of which they were built, the period when they were written, the character of their compilers, the comparative validity of their testimony;—and the different parties proving each other to be guilty of contradictions, improbabilities, and apochryphal frauds, reciprocally accused one another of having founded their creed upon popular reports, vague traditions, and absurd fables, invented by folly, and admitted without examination by unknown, ignorant, or partial writers at uncertain periods and under false historical dates.

A considerable murmur was now excited under the banners of the various sects of *India;* and the *Bramins* entering their protests against the claims of the Jews and the Parsees, exclaimed: Who are these upstart and almost unknown people, these arrogant monopolizers and pretenders, who thus hold themselves up as the founders of nations, and the sole depositaries of their archives? To hear their calculations of five or

or six thousand years, one would suppose that the world was but of yesterday, whereas our chronicles prove a duration of many thousands of ages. And by *what right* are their *books* to be considered as preferable to ours? Are the *Vedes*, the *Chastres*, and the *Pourans*, inferior to the *Bible*, the *Zendavesta*, and the *Sad-der*?* Is not the testimony of our progenitors and of our Gods of equal value with that of the Gods and progenitors of the Occidentalists? O that we were permitted to reveal to profane nations, the mysteries of our religion, were we not strictly bound to throw a sa-

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called in the Egyptian Kouphi;) he celebrates the sacrifice of bread, which is the resurrection, and presents the crown to his followers, menacing them at the same time with the sword, &c.

In these mysteries they tried the courage of the initiated with a thousand terrors, presenting fire to his face, a sword to his breast, &c. they also offered him a crown which he refused, saying, God is my crown: and this crown is to be seen in the celestial sphere by the side of Bootes. The personages in these mysteries were distinguished by the names of the animal constellations. The ceremony of mass is nothing more than an imitation of these mysteries and those of Eleusis. The benediction *the Lord be with you*, is a literal translation of the formular of admission *chou-k, am, p-ka*. See *Beausob. Hist. Du Manicheisme*, vol. ii.

* These are the sacred volumes of the Hindoos; they are sometimes written *Vedams*, *Pouranams*, *Chastrans*, because the Hindoos, like the Persians, are accustomed to give a nasal sound to the terminations of their words, which we represent by the affixes *on* and *an*, and the Portuguese by the affixes *om* and *am*. Many of these books have been translated, thanks to the liberal spirit of Mr. Hastings, who has founded at Calcutta a literary society, and a printing press. At the same time, however, that we express our gratitude to this society, we must be permitted to complain of its exclusive spirit, the number of copies printed of each book being such as it is impossible to purchase them even in England; they are wholly in the hands of the East-India proprietors. Scarcely even is the Asiatic Miscellany known in Europe, and a man must be very learned in oriental antiquity before he so much as hears of the Jones's, the Wilkin's, and the Halhed's, &c. As to the sacred books of the Hindoos, all that are yet in our hands are the Bhagvat Geeta, the Ezour-Vedam, the Bagavadam, and certain fragments of the Chastres printed at the end of the Bhagvat Geeta. These books are in Indostan what the Old and New Testament are in Christendom, the Koran in Turkey, the Sadder and the Zendavesta among the Parses, &c. When I have taken an extensive survey of their contents, I have sometimes asked myself, what would be the loss to the human race if a new Omar condemned them to the flames; and unable to discover any mischief that would ensue, I call the imaginary chest that contains them, the box of Pandora.

cred and impenetrable veil over our doctrine, so as to conceal it from the prying inquisitiveness of every unhallowed eye!" . . . .

And here the Bramins, on uttering these words, fell into an abrupt and profound silence:—"How can we pretend to admit your doctrine," said the legislators, "if you refuse to make it known? And how did its first institutors propagate it, when, in consequence of the knowledge of it being exclusively and solely vested in themselves, their own people became profane in their eyes? Has heaven revealed it, in order that the revelation might become an incommunicable secret?"

The Bramins, however, still continuing mute, and refusing to assign any reason whatever for their taciturnity;—"No matter," said a European, "we can very well afford to let them enjoy the honour of their own secret, the concealment of which is now no better than an empty form, since their sacred books are in our hands, and the whole doctrine publicly divulged: a summary of which I will take the liberty of laying before you."

Then, beginning with an abstract of the *four Vedes*, the *eighteen Pourans*, and five or six of the *Chastres*, he mentioned how an immaterial, infinite, eternal, and *round* Being, after having passed *a whole eternity of time in self-contemplation*, becoming at length desirous of manifesting himself, separated the *male and female faculties*, which existed within himself, and performed an act of generation, of which the *Lingam* remains as an emblem: how from this first act sprung three *divine powers*, bearing the names of *Brama, Bi-*

chen or *Vichenou*, and *Chib* or *Chiven* ;* the office of the first of which was to *create*, of the second to *preserve*, of the third to *destroy* or *change* the forms of the universe. He next gave an historical detail of their operations and personal adventures, and related how *Brama*, proud of having created the world and the eight *Bobouns* (or spheres) of *probation*, and of being preferred to his equal *Chib*, gave rise by his pride to a conflict betwixt them, in which the *globes or celestial orbs were broken to pieces, as if they had been a basket of eggs* : how *Brama*, subdued in this contest, was forced to serve as a pedestal to *Chib*, metamorphosed into the *Lingam* : how *Vichenou*, the *mediatorial* God, had at different periods, assumed nine animal and mortal forms for the preservation of the world ; how first, under that of a *fish*, he saved a family from the *universal deluge*, by which the earth was re-peopled : how afterwards, under the form of a *tortoise*† he brought out from the sea of milk the mountain *Mandreguiri* (the Pole ;) then, under that of a wild *boar*, lacerated and tore to piecas the bowels of the giant *Erenniachessen*, by whom the earth had been *sunk* in the abyss of *Djole*, from which, in his own defence, he restored it ; how he became incarnate under the form of the *Black Shepherd*, and under the name

* These names are differently pronounced according to the different dialects ; thus they say *Birmah*, *Bremma*, *Brouma*. *Bichen* has been turned into *Vichen* by the easy exchange of a *B* for a *V*, and into *Vichenou* by means of a grammatical affix. In the same manner *Chib*, which is synonimus with Satan, and signifies adversary, is frequently written *Chib-a* and *Chiv-en* ; he is called also *Rouder* and *Routr-en*, that is, the destroyer.

† This is the constellation testudo, or the lyre, which was at first a tortoise on account of its slow motion round the pole ; then a lyre, because it is the shell of this reptile on which the strings of the lyre are mounted. See an excellent memoir of *M. Dupis sur l' Origine des Constellations, in quarto.*

of Chris-en, and *delivered the world* of the venomous serpent *Calengam*, whose *head* he at last *crushed*, after having himself been *bit in the foot*.

Passing on, in the next place, to the history of the subaltern or *secondary Genii*, he recounted to the assembly how the *Eternal, for the display of his glory*, had created divers orders of *Angels*, who were officially delegated to sing his praises and to have the direction of the universe: how a part of these angels had revolted under the command of an *ambitious* chief, who wished to usurp the power of God, and to take the whole reigns of government into his own hands: how *God* precipitated them into the world of darkness, there to suffer punishment for their *misdeeds*; how at last, moved with compassion, he consented to rescue them from thence, and to receive them again into his good graces after they had been previously tried by a long course of probation: how, for this purpose, having created *fifteen orbs or planetary regions*, and bodies to inhabit them, he obliged these rebellious angels to undergo *eighty-seven transmigrations*; how the *souls, thus purified*, returned back to their *primitive source, to the ocean of life and animation*, from which they had emanated: how, since all living beings contained a portion of this *universal soul*, it became an act superlatively culpable to deprive them of it. Lastly, he proceeded to develope the *rites and ceremonies* of this religion, when, speaking of *offerings and libations of milk and of butter to Gods of wood and of brass, and of purifications with the dung and urine of the cow*, he was interrupted by an universal

murmur, mixed with loud bursts of laughter, which broke off the thread of his narrative.

And each of the different groupes began to pass their judgment upon this system. "They are idolaters," said the Mussulmen, "and it is our *religious* duty to exterminate them." . . . . "They are beside themselves, poor creatures," said the followers of *Confucius*, "and it is our duty to endeavour to cure them." "What charming Gods," cried others again, "what a droll and pleasant set of besmoked, greasy-looking jackanapeses, which they wash like little babies that have befouled themselves, and from which they are obliged to drive away the flies, that come to pay their sweet-toothed devotions to the honey, and to deposit their excrementitious oblations upon them!"

At these words a Bramin, bursting with indignation, furiously exclaimed: "These are inscrutable and profound mysteries, emblematical of truths, which you are unworthy to know."

"And how comes it," replied a *Lama* of Thibet, "that you are more worthy to know them than ourselves? Is it because you *pretend to be sprung from the head of Brama*, while you leave the rest of mankind to derive their origin from the less noble parts of his body? If you mean to support the pride of your boasted extraction, and the distinctions of your *casts*, prove to us first, that you are a different order of human beings from ourselves. And, in the next place, prove the existence of the allegories, which you talk so much of, by tracing them historically to their source; in a word, prove to us, that you are the genuine founders of the whole of this system: for, we will take

upon us to prove, were it at all necessary, that you are no more than plagiaries and *corrupters* of it; that you have borrowed the ancient paganism of the western world, and blended it, by a strange jumble of things, with the purely spiritual doctrine of our *God*;* a doctrine which stoops not to address itself to the senses, from which it is totally prescinded, and which was perfectly unknown to the world until the mission of *Beddou.*"

And instantly voices without number called out to be informed of the nature of this doctrine, and of this *God*, with whose very name the majority of them were wholly unacquainted. In compliance, therefore, with their injunction, the *Lama* thus commenced his recital:

"In the *beginning*," said he, "there was *one God*, self-existent, who, after passing a whole eternity absorbed in the contemplation of his own essence, determined at length to manifest his perfections extraneously without himself, and accordingly created the matter of the *world*. The *four elements* being produced, but as yet in a state of discordant *confusion; He breathed upon the face of the waters*, and they immediately became an immense *bubble* of the shape of an *egg*, which, when complete, became the *vault* or *spherical frame of heaven*, in which *the world is inclosed*.† Having

* All the ancient opinions of the Egyptian and Grecian theologians are to be found in India, and they appear to have been introduced, by means of the commerce of Arabia and the vicinity of Persia, time immemorial.

† This cosmogony of the Lamas, the Bonzes, and even the Bramins, as Henry Lord asserts, is literally that of the ancient Egyptians. "The Egyptians," says Porphyry, "call Kneph, intelligence, or efficient cause of the universe. They relate that this God vomited an egg, from which was produced another God named Phtha or Vulcan, (igneous principle or the sun,) and they add, that this egg is the world." Euseb. Præp. Evang. p. 115.
"They represent," says the same author in another place, "the God

made the earth and the *bodies of different beings, this God, the essence of motion,* imparted to them a portion of *his own divine nature or substance,* in order to vitalize and animate them. Thus the *soul* of every living thing, being only a fractional part of the *universal soul,* is never *annihilated,* never *perishes,* but merely *changes* its *form* and *mould* by passing successively *into different bodies.* But of all forms, that of *man,* is most pleasing to the *Deity,* as approaching the nearest to his divine perfections. When a man, by withdrawing and totally divorcing his mind from the senses, *becomes absorbed in the contemplation of himself,* he begins to discover the *Divinity,* that resides within him, and, in fact, becomes himself the Divinity. Thus is *God* incessantly rendering himself *incarnate;* but his greatest and most solemn *incarnation* was that in which he appeared three thousand years ago in *Kachemire,* under the name of *Fot* or *Beddou,* for the purpose of teaching the doctrine of *annihilation and renunciation of self.*" And the *Lama* then proceeded to give the history of *Fot,* observing that he had sprung from the right side of a virgin of the royal blood, who, by becoming a mother, did not however cease to be a virgin: that the king of the country, uneasy and chagrined at his birth, *was anxious to put him to death, and accordingly caused all the males, who were born at the same period, to be massacred:* that, being saved

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Kneph, or efficient cause, under the form of a man in deep blue (the colour of the sky) having in his hand a sceptre, a belt round his body, and a small bonnet royal of light feathers on his head, to denote how very subtile and sagacious the idea of that being is." Upon which I shall observe that Keph in Hebrew signifies a wing, a feather, and that this colour of sky-blue is to be found in the majority of the Indian Gods, and is, under the name of Narayan, one of their most distinguished epithets.

by shepherds, *Beddou* spent his life *in the desert till the age of thirty years, at which time he began his mission* to enlighten mankind, and *to deliver them from demons;* that he performed a multitude of the most astonishing *miracles*, spent his life in *fasting* and the severest mortifications, and at his death bequeathed to his disciples the volume in which the doctrinal principles of his religion are contained. The Lama then began to read—

"He that forsaketh his father and his mother to follow me," *says Fot*, "shall become a perfect *Samanean, (a heavenly man.)*

"He that keepeth my precepts to the fourth degree of perfection, shall acquire the power of flying in the air, of moving heaven and earth, of prolonging or shortening his existence, (of rising again.)

"The Samanean renounces the possession of riches, and restricts himself to the bare use of such things only as are indispensably necessary. He mortifies his body, stifles his passions, covets nothing, attaches his affections to nothing, meditates incessantly upon my doctrine, endures injuries with patience, and bears no enmity against his neighbour.

"*Heaven and earth,*" says Fot, "*shall perish;*" despise, therefore, your bodies which are composed of the four *perishable* elements, and think only of your *immortal* souls.

"Listen not to the solicitations of the flesh; apprehension and sorrow are the product of the passions: smother the passions, and apprehension and sorrow will become extinct.

"Whosoever dies," says Fot, "without having embraced my doctrine, shall return again upon the earth, until he shall practise it."

The Lama was going on with his citations, when he was interrupted by the Christians, who insisted that this was no other than their own religion altered and disguised under a different dress; that *Fot* was *Jesus* himself *disfigured*, and that the Lamas were nothing more than a bastard and degenerate set of Nestorians and Manicheans masked under another name.

But the *Lama*,* supported by all the *Chamans*,

* This is asserted by our missionaries, and among others by Georgi in his unfinished work of the Thibetan alphabet: but if it can be proved that the Manicheans were but plagiarists, and the ignorant echo of a doctrine that existed fifteen hundred years before them, what becomes of the declarations of Georgi? See upon this subject, Beausob. Hist. du Manicheisme.

But the Lama demonstrated, &c. The eastern writers in general agree in placing the birth of *Bedou* 1072 years before Jesus Christ, which makes him the contemporary of Zoroaster, with whom, in my opinion, they confound him. It is certain that this doctrine notoriously existed at that epocha; it is found entire in that of Orpheus, Pythagoras, and the Indian gymnosophists. But the gymnosophists are cited at the time of Alexander as an ancient sect already divided into Brachmans and Samaneans. See *Bardesanes en Saint Jerome, Epitre a Jovien.* Pythagoras lived in the ninth century before Jesus Christ; See Chronology of the twelve ages; and Orpheus is of still greater antiquity. If, as is the case, the doctrine of Pythagoras and that of Orpheus are of Egyptian origin, that of Bedou goes back to the common source; and in reality the Egyptian priests recite that Hermes, as he was dying, said: "I have hitherto lived an exile from my country, to which I now return. Weep not for me, I ascend to the celestial abode where each of you will follow in his turn: there God is: this life is only death." Chalcidius in Thimæum.

Such was the profession of faith of the Samaneans, the sectaries of Orpheus, and the Pythagoreans. Farther, Hermes is no other than Bedou himself; for among the Indians, Chinese, Lamas, *&c.* the planet Mercury and the corresponding day of the Week (Wednesday) bear the name of Bedou, and this accounts for his being placed in the rank of mythological beings, and discovers the illusion of his pretended existence as a man, since it is evident that Mercury was not a human being, but the Genius or Decan, who, placed at the summer solstice, opened the Egyptian year; hence his attributes taken from the constellation Syrius, and his name of Anubis, as well as that of Esculapius, having the figure of a man and the head of a dog: hence his serpent, which is the Hydra, emblem of the Nyle (Hydor, humidity;) and from this serpent he seems to have derived his name of Hermes, as Remes (with a schin) in the oriental languages, signifies serpent. Now Bedou and Hermes being the same names, it is manifest of what antiquity is the system ascribed to the former. As to the name of Sa-

Bonzes, *Gonnis*, *Talapoins* of *Siam*, of *Ceylon*, of *Japan*, and of *China*, demonstrated to the Christians from the writings of their own authors, that the doctrine of the *Samaneans* was known through the East upwards of a thousand years before Christianity existed; that their name was cited previous to the reign of *Alexander*, and that the mention of *Boutta* or *Beddou*, was anterior to that of *Jesus*—"And now," said they, retorting upon the Christians, "do you prove to us in your turn that you are not yourselves *degenerated Samaneans*, and that the man whom you consider as the *institutor of your sect* is not *Fot* himself under a different garb. Demonstrate his existence by positive *historical* documents of the same date with those which we have noticed,* for, as there appears to us to be no

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manean it is precisely that of Chaman preserved in Tartary, China, and India. The interpretation given to it is, man of the woods, a hermit mortifying the flesh, such being the characteristic of this sect: but its literal meaning is, celestial (Samacui) and explains the system of those who are called by it. The system is the same as that of the sectaries of Orpheus, of the Essenians, of the ancient Anchorets of Persia and the whole eastern country. See Porphyry, de Abstin. Animal.

These celestial and penitent men carried in India their insanity to such an extreme as to wish not to touch the earth, and they accordingly lived in cages suspended to the trees, where the people, whose admiration was not less abused, brought them provisions. During the night there were frequent robberies, rapes and murders, and it was at length discovered that they were committed by those men, who descending from their cages, thus indemnified themselves for their restraint during the day. The Bramins, their rivals, embraced the opportunity of exterminating them; and from that time their name in India has been synonymous with hypocrite. See Hist. de la Chine, in 5 vols. quarto, at the note page 50; Hist. de Huns. 2 vols. and preface to the Ezour-Vedan.

* There are absolutely no other monuments of the existence of Jesus Christ as a human being, than a passage in Josephus (*Antiq. Jud. lib.* 18. c. 3.) a single phrase in Tacitus (*Annal. lib.* 15. c. 44.) and the Gospels. But the passage in Josephus is unanimously acknowledged to be apocryphal, and to have been interpolated towards the close of the third century, (*See Trad. de Josephe, par M. Gillet;*) and that of Tacitus is so vague and so evidently taken from the deposition of the Christians before the tribunals, that it may be ranked in the class of evangelical records. It remains to inquire of what authority are these records. "All the world knows,"

ostensible and authentic testimony on record to found our belief upon, we feel ourselves, on that ground, morally necessitated to deny it in the most unequivocal and formal terms; and we moreover maintain, on the contrary, that your gospels are taken from the books of the *Mythiriace* of *Persia*, and those of the *Essenians* of *Syria*, who were themselves only reformed *Samaneans*."*

These words excited a general outcry on the part of the Christians, and a fresh dispute of a still more violent and serious nature was on the point of breaking out, when a groupe of *Chinese Chumans*, and *Talapoins* of *Siam* came forward, assuring them that they could readily adjust every difference, and produce a general harmony of opinion in the whole body. And one of them, addressing the assembly, said: "It is high time we should put an end to all these frivolous altercations, by drawing aside the veil which conceals from your view the *interior* and *secret* doctrine which

says Faustus, who, though a Manichean, was one of the most learned men of the third century, "All the world knows that the gospels were neither written by Jesus Christ, nor his apostles, but by certain unknown persons who rightly judging that they should not obtain belief respecting things which they had not seen, placed at the head of their recitals the names of contemporary apostles." See *Beausob* vol. i. and *His. des Apologistes de la Relig. Chret. par Burigni*, a sagacious writer, who has demonstrated the absolute uncertainty of those foundations of the Christian religion; so that the existence of Jesus is no better proved than that of Osiris and Hercules, or that of Fot or Bedou, with whom, says M. de Guignes, the Chinese continually confound him, for they never call Jesus by any other name than Fot. *Hist. de Huns.*

* That is to say, from the pious romances formed out of the sacred legends of the mysteries of Myrthra, Ceres, Isis, &c. from whence are equally derived the books of the Hindoos and the Bonzes. Our missionaries have long remarked a striking resemblance between those books and the gospels. M. Wilkins expressly mentions it in a note in the Bhagvat Greeta. All agree that Krisna, Fot, and Jesus have the same characteristic features; but religious prejudice has stood in the way of drawing from this circumstance the proper and natural inference. To time and reason must it be left to display the truth.

Fot himself, on his death-bed, revealed to his disciples.*

"All these theologicial opinions," said he, "are mere fables; all these stories of the attributes, actions, and life of the Gods, are nothing more than allegories and mythological emblems, invented to convey, under a pleasing mask, ingenious moral sentiments, and the knowledge of the operations of nature in the action of the elements and the revolutions of the planets.

"In fact, the whole is in amount nothing more, strictly speaking, than mere *illusion*, *vision*, and *romance;* the *moral metempsychosis* is no more than a figurative sense of the *physical metempsychosis*, or the transition of that *successive moving power* whereby the component elements of a body, which never perish, migrate or pass, after the body itself is dissolved, into other *mediums*, and again form new combinations. The *soul* is merely the *principle of vitality* resulting from the properties of *matter* and the activity of the elements in bodies, wherein they create a spontaneous *movement*. To suppose this effect of the active organs, which is coeval with them, which is co-developed with them, and which sleeps when they sleep, to survive and separately subsist when organization or mechanism is no more, is one of the fictions of a prolific but perverted imagination, which, however plausible and captivating, however delicious and enchanting to the fancy, is

* The Budsoists have two doctrines, the one public and ostensible, the other interior and secret, precisely like the Egyptian priests. It may be asked, why this distinction? It is, that as the public doctrine recommends offerings, expiations, endowments, &c. the priests find their profit in preaching it to the people; whereas the other, teaching the vanity of worldly things, and attended with no lucre, it is thought proper to make it known only to adepts. Can the teachers and followers of this religion be better classed than under the heads of knavery and credulity?

but an empty dream in reality. God himself is nothing more than the *great mover*, the *occult power diffused through all things that have being*, the *sum or aggregate of their laws and their properties*, the *animating principle*, in a word, the *soul of the universe*; which, by reason of the infinite diversity of its relations and operations, considered sometimes as *simple*, and sometimes as *multiple*, sometimes as *active* and sometimes as *passive*, has ever presented to the human mind an insoluble enigma. What the understanding is capable of comprehending with the greatest perspecuity is, that *matter does not perish*, that it possesses essential properties, by which the whole œconomy of the world is governed analogous to that of a *living* and organized being; that the knowledge of its *laws* relatively to man is what constitutes his *wisdom*; that in the *observance* of them consist *virtue* and *merit*; and *evil*, *sin* and *vice*, in the *ignorance* and *violation* of them: that *happiness and misfortune are the result of such observance or neglect* pursuant to the same law of *necessity* by which *light bodies ascend and heavy ones fall*, and to a fatality of causes and effects, the chain of which extends in an uninterrupted series of links from the most minute atom to stars of the greatest distance and magnitude."*

No sooner had he uttered these words, than a crowd of Theologians of other sects instantly exclaimed, that this doctrine was rank *materialism*, and those wi professed it, *impious Atheists, enemies both of Go*

* These are the very expressions of La Loubre, in his description of the kingdom of Siam and the theology of the Bonzes. Their dogmas, compared with those of the ancient philosophers of Greece and Italy, give a complete representation of the whole system of the Stoics and Epicureans, mixed with astrological superstitions, and some traits of Pythagorism.

and man, who ought to be destroyed and weeded out from the face of the earth.—"A very *pious* and summary mode of proceeding truly!" said the *Chamans*: "but even supposing that we are mistaken, which indeed is by no means impossible, since it is *one of the leading characteristics of the human mind to be fallible*,—yet what *right* have you to *deprive human beings like yourselves of the life* which God has given them? If *heaven considers us as so very criminal, and looks upon us with an eye of horror*, why does it dispense to us the self-same blessings as to you? If it treats us with perfect *toleration*, what right have you to be less indulgent? Ye *religious* men, who speak of God with so much confidence and certainty, condescend to tell us what he is; teach us how to comprehend those abstract and metaphysical beings which you call *God* and *soul* —*substance without matter, existence without body, life without organs or sensations.* If ye have cognizance of these beings by means of *your corporeal senses*, or by their operation in *reflection*, render them in like manner cognizable to us. But, if ye speak of them merely upon *testimony* and *tradition*, produce your credentials regularly authenticated, and establish our faith, by a clear and explicit recital of facts, upon the same common ground of evidence and conviction with your own."

There now arose a warm and general controversy between the Theologians *respecting God and his divine nature, his mode of acting and manifesting himself, the nature of the soul and its union with the body; whether it has existence prior to the organs, or from the period of their formation only; concerning a fu-*

ture state and another world ; and every school, every sect, every individual, differing more or less on all these points, and supporting the motives of their dissent by plausible arguments, and by respectable but opposite authorities, became universally bewildered *in* an inextricable maze of contradictions.

At length the legislators, having proclaimed silence, and recalling their attention to the original object of discussion, thus addressed them :—" Leaders and instructors of nations, the great motive for which you first assembled together was *the investigation of truth ;* and every one of you, confident at the outset in his own infallibility, expected the minds of the rest to bow implicit assent to the transcendent rectitude of his creed : but, soon after finding opinions to clash and run counter to each other, you felt the absolute necessity of submitting them to some common test of comparison, some regular standard or criterion of evidence ; and it was accordingly agreed, that all should come forward and severally exhibit the proofs and grounds of their respective faith. A series of facts were therefore adduced with that view, and strenuously defended by the advocates of each party ; but every religion, every sect boasting its miracles and its martyrs, and all equally producing authorities in vindication of their own, and offering to sacrifice their lives in order to evince their truth, the balance seemed to preponderate in favour of no particular party more than another on that score.

" Ye proceeded, in the next place, to submit your doctrines to the scrutiny of *reason ;*—but, since, the self-same testimony was alledged in proof of opposite tenets ; since assertions were advanced and combated

by the same kind of gratuitous assumptions, and since both the affirmative and negative side of every question of faith was equally contested and *denied by the same common right of objection*, nothing of course was eventually demonstrated. A still further consequence that arose from thus confronting your systems, was, that, notwithstanding they exhibited an extreme disparity of feature in a great many points, their resemblance to each other in the general ground of the picture was not less striking. Hence arose another perplexing embarrassment respecting the *originality* of your different scriptural codes. Accordingly, each party insisted on its own sect being the sole patentees and genuine promulgators of the primitive and orthodox faith, to whom the sacred deposit had been first given in charge, and taxed the rest with *heterodoxy, adulteration, and plagiarism*; and this again led to the intricate question, *how the various notions of religion had been handed down and transmitted from people to people.*

"But your difficulties increased in a compound proportion, when you came to unravel and trace out the successive progression and historical meanderings of these religious notions. The farther you advanced, the more you became enveloped in darkness and perplexity; and, after all your most sanguine and elaborate researches, you found that you were only grasping at a shadow, that they rested on a basis totally inaccessible to the senses, and that there was, of consequence, no possible mode of judging or framing an opinion upon the subject. Thus, foiled in your enquiries, you were

driven to the unavoidable necessity of owning, that, in asserting them as undoubted matters of fact, you were no more than the mere echo of your forefathers. Another important question then presented itself to your notice,—*how your forefathers came at the knowledge of them*, who had themselves no other faculties or means of becoming acquainted with them than yourselves. But, as the regular *succession of theological ideas*, as well as their origin and manner of existence in the human understanding were equally mysterious, the whole mechanism of your religious opinions became a complicated problem of metaphysical subtilty and historical research.

"But, since these opinions, however extraordinary they may be, have notwithstanding some origin, as indeed all ideas, even the most abstract and fantastical, have in nature some physical model, we must use our best efforts in order to discover that origin, and what that model is; in short, we must inform ourselves how the understanding came by these ideas of *God*, the *soul*, and *immaterial beings*, that are so abstruse and obscure, and which form the basis of so many religious systems; and we must accordingly labour to trace out their *lineal descent*, and the periodical *alterations* they have undergone in their successive progress and ramifications during the lapse of ages. If therefore there can be found in this assembly persons who have made these objects their peculiar study, let them come f ward and endeavour, in the face of the world, to dis the gloom of opinions, by which the intellectual ho zon has for so long a period been overcast."

CHAP. XXII.

ORIGIN AND GENEALOGY OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS.

No sooner had the legislators made this proposal, than a new groupe, formed of persons from different standards, but not designated by any of its own, advanced within the circle; one of the members of which thus spoke in behalf of the rest:

"Legislators, friends of evidence and of truth!—It is not at all astonishing, that the subject, which we have jointly undertaken to investigate, should be involved in such a cloud of darkness and obscurity, when we reflect, that exclusive of the difficulties naturally attending such a discussion, the mind, fettered and chained down by the oppressive restraints and despotical intolerance of every religious system, has not to this hour been able to give free scope and utterance to its thoughts, or to enjoy the virtuous privilege of liberal enquiry. But, since it has at length recovered its freedom and natural elasticity, and can speak the ingenuous language of its own feelings without fear or reflection, we will, now that our duty beckons us to fulfil the object of your request, publicly submit to your candid and impartial consideration, and to that of the world at large, what a long and laborious course of study has suggested as most rational in the solution of this intricate problem to minds not blinded or warped by the bias of prejudice: and we shall do this, not with the pretension of controling your opinions by imposing our own as a dictatorial creed, but merely with the view of putting the minds of others in motion, who are ca-

pable of illuminating the subject by a greater accession of light.

"To you, ye religious guides and preceptors of nations, to you it is well known, in what profound obscurity the nature, origin, and history of the doctrines you teach are enveloped. Imposed by force and authority, inculcated by education, and maintained by the influence of example, they have been perpetuated from age to age, while habit and thoughtless inattention have rivetted and given stability to their sway. But, if man, enlightened by experience and reflection, will only look back and carefully examine into the prejudices of his infancy, he will not fail to discover a multiplicity of revolting incongruities and contradictions, which will awaken his sagacity, and call forth the exertion of his reasoning powers.

"Recurring, in the first place, to the diversity and opposition observable in the articles of faith adopted by different nations, his mind becomes callous to all their rival claims to infallibility, and arming itself with the inferences deducible from the reciprocal pretensions of the contending antagonists, is impelled with all the mental force and hardihood of rational conviction, to conclude, that the *senses and the understanding emanating directly from God* are *a law not less sacred* and a guide not less sure than the *indirect and contradictory codes* of prophets.*

* Many instances of their contradicting themselves might be adduced from the Koran, &c. as well as from the Hebrew Scriptures. It may however be sufficient to refer to vii. Isaiah, verse 14 and 28. ii. Chronicles, 16 and 17. i. Samuel 34 and 52. 37 and 38 of Jeremiah. i. Kings c. 10. ii. Kings c. 3.

In Deuteronomy Moses enjoins a man, if his brother dies, to marry his wife, though to do so is forbidden by him in Leviticus. *Moses* says that God visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the fourth generation *Ezekiel* holds an opposite doctrine, &c. &c. &c.

"When he comes in the next place, to push his researches into the structure and contexture of these *codes* themselves, he finds that the laws which are reputed *divine*, that is, *immutable* and *eternal*, originate from the *circumstances* of times, of places, and of persons; that they derive one from another in a kind of genealogical order, in as much as they all mutually borrow their fundamental principles from the same relative and common stock of ideas, which the founders of them have modified every one according to his own fancy.

"Again, when he attempts to trace these ideas to their source, he finds that they lose themselves in the night of time, in the infancy of nations, even as far back as the origin of the world, with which they claim a connection: where, buried in the gloomy darkness of chaos and the fabulous empire of tradition, they present themselves to his notice accompanied with circumstances of so wonderful a complexion, and so strikingly repugnant to the ordinary course of things, that they seem to set human comprehension at defiance. These very circumstances themselves shed, however, a ray of light upon the mind, when it first begins to reason upon them, which tends to elucidate and resolve the difficulty: for, if the wonderful and miraculous events, which we find mentioned in systems of religion, have actually taken place; if, for example, the metamorphoses, the apparitions, and the conversations of one or a plurality of Gods, as recorded in the *sacred books* of the Hindoos, the Hebrews, and the Parsees, be real historical truths, it follows as a necessary consequence, that nature at that period was perfectly

different from the nature we are at present acquainted with; that the people of modern days do not resemble those of the primeval world, and that they have no occasion, therefore, to trouble their heads further about them.

"On the contrary, if these miraculous occurrences have never had any real existence in nature, then we must, of course, regard them in no other point of view, than as the mere creatures or fabrications of the human mind itself: and, in as much as our own experience convinces us, that the mind is still, at this day, capable of producing the most fantastic combinations, this very fact itself, serves at once to account for the appearance of such monstrous phœnomena in history. The only difficulty then is to ascertain how and for what purpose these antique productions of the imagination were originally formed.—Now, if we examine with minute attention the subjects they pourtray, if we analyse the ideas which they combine and associate, and accurately weigh all the circumstances to which they allude, we shall be enabled to come at an explanation of these incredible incidents perfectly conformable to the laws of nature. By this process it will be found, that these recitals, which have so fabulous an aspect, possess a figurative meaning different from their apparent one; that the facts, which are thought to partake so much of the marvellous, are events of a very simple and physical nature, but, by their being either lamely understood or lamely represented, have become disfigured, owing to accidental causes arising from the very nature of the human mind, to the confusion of signs symbolically employed to represent the objects, to the indeterminat

meaning of words and to the defects of oral and the imperfection of written language. It will be found, for instance, that those Gods that have such singular offices assigned them in all these systems, are nothing but the *physical powers* of nature, the *elements*, the *winds*, the *stars*, and *meteors*, that have been *personified* by the necessary mechanism of language and of the understanding;—that their *life*, their *manners*, and their *actions*, are nothing more than the *divers operations* and *relations of these*, and that the whole of their pretended history, is nothing more than a description of their various phœnomena, drawn by the first naturalists who observed them, but taken in a contrary sense by the vulgar who did not understand it, or by succeeding generations who forgot it. In a word, it will be discovered, that all the theological notions respecting the origin of the world, the nature of *God*, the revelation of his laws, and the *manifestation of his person*, are merely recitals of astronomical facts, figurative and emblematical narratives of the motion and influence of the heavenly bodies: and it will be thus convincingly seen, that the very *idea of the Divinity*, at present so obscure, abstracted, and metaphysical, was, according to its primitive model, merely that of the powers of the material universe, considered sometimes analytically, as they appear in their agents and their phœnomena, and sometimes synthetically, as forming one whole, and exhibiting an harmonious relation in all its parts: and this investigation will shew, that the name *God* has been bestowed sometimes upon the *wind*, *fire*, *water*, and the whole of the elements; sometimes upon the *sun*, the *stars*, the *planets*, and their influences; sometimes up-

on the *universe at large, or the component mass of visible nature;* sometimes upon abstract and metaphysical *qualities,* such as *space, duration, motion,* and *intelligence,* and altogether with this result, that *the idea of a Deity* has not originated from the *miraculous revelation of invisible beings,* but has been the *natural production of the human mind itself,* the progress and revolutions of which in the knowledge of the visible universe and its material agents it has constantly and uniformly followed.

"Yes, in vain do nations refer the origin of their religion to heavenly inspiration: in vain do their dogmas plead a supernatural commencement of things; the original barbarism of the human race, attested by their own monuments,* belies at once all their assertions: and, what is more, an existing and irresistible fact bears a victorious testimony against the dubious and uncertain facts of past times: for *since man receives no ideas but through the medium of his senses,*† it evidently follows, that every notion, attributed to any other origin than that of sensation and experience, is an erroneous hypothesis invented at some period posterior to that of the pretended events. But, indeed, we need only take a very cursory view of the different religious systems relating to the origin of the world and the action of the *Gods,* to discover at every turn, both

* It is the unanimous testimony of history, and even of legends, that the first human beings were every where savages, and that it was to civilize them and teach them to *make bread* that the gods manifested themselves.

† The rock on which all the ancients have split, and which have occasioned all their errors, has been their supposing the idea of God to be innate and coeternal with the soul; and hence all the reveries developed in Plato and Jamblicus. See the Timæus, the Phedon, and De Mysteries Ægyptiorum, sect. 1. c. 3.

in the ideas and the language, an anticipation of a state of things, which had no existence till a long time subsequent to the period supposed. Hence, fortified and rendered impregnable by all these contradictions, reason, at once discarding every thing which has to step beyond nature for its proof, and regarding every historical system as inadmissibly bad, which militates against probability, establishes its own, and says with confidence :

" Before any nation received dogmas already invented from another nation ; before one generation inherited the ideas of a preceding generation, none of these complicated systems had existence. The first human beings, the simple children of nature, antecedent to every event, being entire strangers to every species of knowledge, were born without any idea of those articles of faith which are the result of scholastic disputation : of those religious rites, founded on arts and usages which had as yet no existence ; of those precepts, which suppose the pre-developement of the passions ; of those codes of law, which suppose a language and a social system not then in being ; of that *God*, the whole of whose attributes imply a previous knowledge of physical objects, and the very idea of whose actions is suggested by the experience of a despotical form of government ; or, in fine, of that soul and all those metaphysical or spiritual existences, which we are told are not the object of the senses, but which, however, we must forever have remained unacquainted with, if our understanding had not gained intelligence of them by

the perceptive feelings or sensations of our organs.* Before it could arrive at all these notions, an immense series of preliminary facts and results, must have been progressively traced and explored. Man, originally in a savage state, must have learned from slow and repeated trials the scientific use of his organs. Successive generations must have invented, multiplied, and refined upon the means of subsistence; and the understanding, disengaged from attending to the first wants of nature, must have risen to the complicated art of comparing ideas, digesting reasonings, and seizing upon abstract similitudes."

Sect. I. *Origin of the idea of God: Worship of the elements and physical powers of nature.*

"It was not till after having surmounted these obstacles, and run a long career in the night of history, that man, reflecting on his own condition, began to perceive himself in subjection to *powers superiour* to his own and *independent of his will*. The sun gave him light and warmth; fire burned, thunder terrified, water drowned, the winds buffeted him; all beings acted up-

* The Egyptian, Grecian, Roman, and most of the other ancient mythologists, represented their deities as beings of both sexes—young, old, and middle aged, as begetting one another. Some addicted to love, some to wine, some to war, and some to the chace.

The Hebrews, (who, if we judge by the writings of Moses and the prophets where nothing but temporal pains are denounced against sinners,) seem to have entertained no idea of a future state of rewards and punishments—represented their deity as actuated by human passions, subject to human frailties, fickleness and wrath.

The Christians represent him in their pictures as a large old man, with a long, grey, beard; Jesus, whom they call his son, as a man of middle age, and the Holy Ghost, under the likeness of a dove.

Clear proofs, that man has formed his ideas of the first cause in his likeness—Whilst he impiously says, that "*God made him after his own image.*"——

on him in a *powerful* manner *not to be resisted*. For a long time, an automaton or mere animal-machine, he remained passive to this action, without ever enquiring into the cause of it; but the moment he began to be prompted by the feeling of desire to account to himself for it, he was electrified with astonishment; and, passing from the surprise of the first impulse of thought to the reverie of curiosity, he formed a series of inferences.

"At first, on considering the action of the elements upon him, he conceived, relatively to himself, an idea of *weakness*, of *subjection*, and, relatively to them, an idea of *power*, of *domination*; and this idea of *power* was the primitive and fundamental type of all his conceptions of the *Divinity*.

"The action of natural bodies, in the second place, excited in him sensations of *pleasure* or *pain*, of *good* or *evil*. As a natural consequence of his organization, he became affected with *love* or *aversion* towards them, he *desired* or *dreaded* their presence; and thus *fear* or *hope* became the origin of every idea of *religion*.

"Afterwards, judging of every thing by comparison, and remarking in those beings a spontaneous motion analogous to his own, he supposed a *will*, an *intelligence* to be connected with that motion, similar to what he felt existing in himself; and hence he was led, by induction, to a further conclusion.—Having found by experience that certain modes of behaviour towards his fellow-creatures, wrought a change in their affections and influenced their conduct, he had recourse to the same modes of behaviour in order to influence the *powerful beings* of the universe.—When my fellow-being,

of superior strength," said he to himself, "is disposed to injure me, I humble myself before him, and my prayer has the knack of appeasing him. I will therefore pray to the *powerful beings* that assail me:—I will supplicate the intelligences of the winds, of the planets, of the waters, and they will understand me. I will conjure them to *avert the calamities*, and to *grant me* the blessings which are at their disposal:—I will work upon their feelings by my *tears*, and win their compassion by my gifts and offerings, and by this means I shall be enabled to *enjoy the benefit of a comfortable existence*."

"Thus man, in the native simplicity of his heart during the infancy of his reason, held converse with the sun and moon, fancifully gifted the great *agents* of nature with an understanding and passions like his own; and thought by empty sounds and useless services to change their inflexible laws. Fatal error! He desired that the water should ascend, the mountains be removed, the stone mount in the air; and, superadding a fictitious to a real world, he created in his own imagination ghostly *phantoms of belief*, to be the scare-crows of his mind and the torment of the human race.*

"Thus, the ideas of *God* and of *religion* sprung, like all others, from physical objects, and were produced in the mind of man by his sensations, his wants, the circumstances of his life, and the progressive state of his knowledge.

"But, as these *ideas* of the *Divinity* had all the di-

* The ancients had a trinity of evil spirits instead of good ones. Alecto, Tisiphone and Megara, have been deposed by the Unitarean faith in Satan—for though the New Testament speaks of Belzebub and legions of inferior devils, we find but one recognized in the Creeds adopted by any of the modern churches. *But on him they seem willing to bestow the authority of the world.*

vers orders of natural beings for their prototypes or first *models*, the divinity was in consequence as various and *manifold* originally, as the forms under which He seemed to act.—Each being was a *Power*, a *Genius*; and thus the first men fancied the universe crowded with Gods without number.

"Again, as the *ideas* of the *Divinity* were *actuated* and *modified* by the affections of the human heart, they naturally became arranged according to the attributes of distinction chalked out by the sensations of pain and pleasure, of love and hatred. The powers of nature, the Gods, and the Genii were consequently classed into *beneficent* and *maleficent*, into good and evil ones; and hence it is, that these two characteristic distinctions universally pervade every system of religion.

"These ideas, analogous to the condition of their inventors, were, in principle, for a long time confused and gross. Wandering in woods, beset with wants, and destitute of resources, men in their savage state had no leisure to make tedious comparisons and draw conclusions. Experiencing more sufferings than they tasted enjoyments, their most habitual sentiment was fear, their theology terror, their worship confined to certain modes of salutation and of oblations, paid to beings whom they supposed to be *ferocious* and *greedy* like themselves. In their state of *equality* and *independence*, no one took upon him the office of mediator with Gods as *insubordinate* and *poor* as himself. No one having any superfluity to dispose of, there existed no parasite among them under the name of priest, no tribute under the name of victim, no jurisdiction under the name of altar; their doctrines and morality indiscrimi-

nately confounded together, amounted to no more than self-preservation; and their religion, merely an arbitrary idea, having no influence on the mutual relations subsisting between man and man, was only a vain homage paid to *the visible powers of nature.*

"Such was necessarily the first origin of every idea of the Divinity."

The orator then addressing himself to the savage nations said: "We appeal to you, who have adopted no artificial or spurious ideas of foreign extraction, whether you have ever formed to yourselves any other conceptions of the Deity than those already alluded to? We call you also to witness, ye learned theologians, whether the monuments of antiquity do not all unanimously bear record to the same facts?"*

* It clearly results, says Plutarch, from the verses of Orpheus and the sacred books of the Egyptians and Phrygians, that the ancient theology, not only of the Greeks but of all nations, was nothing more than a system of physics, a picture of the operations of nature, wrapped up in mysteries, allegories and enigmatical symbols, in a manner that the ignorant multitude attended rather to their apparent than to their hidden meaning, and even in what they understood of the latter, supposed there to be something more deep than what they perceived. Fragment of a work of Plutarch now lost, quoted by Eusebius, Præpar. Evang. lib. 3. ch. 1, p. 83.

The majority of philosophers, says Porphyry, and among others Cæromon (who lived in Egypt in the first age of Christianity,) imagine there never to have been any other world than the one we see, and acknowledged no other Gods of all those recognized by the Egyptians, than such as are commonly called planets, signs of the Zodiac, and constellations; whose aspects, that is, rising and setting, are supposed to influence the fortunes of men; to which they add their divisions of the signs into decans and dispensers of time, whom they style lords of the ascendant, whose names, virtues in the relieving distempers, rising, setting, and presages of future events, are the subjects of almanacks; (for be it observed, that the Egyptian priests had almanacks the exact counterpart of Matthew Lansbergs;) for when the priests affirmed that the sun was the architect of the universe, Chæromon presently concludes that all their narratives respecting Isis and Osiris, together with their other sacred fables, referred in part to the planets, the phases of the moon and the revolution of the sun, and in part to the stars of the daily and nightly hemispheres and the river Nile; in a word, in all cases to physical and natural existences and never to such as might be immaterial and incorporeal. . . . All these philosophers believe that the acts of our will and the motion of our bodies depend upon those of the stars to which they are subjected, and they refer every thing to the laws of physical necessity, which

Sect. II. *Second System : Worship of the Stars, or Sabeism.*

"But those very monuments afterwards present to us a more methodical and complex system, that of the worship of all the stars, adored at one time under their proper form, at another under emblems and figurative symbols. This worship, however, was also the effect of the knowledge of man in physics, and derived immediately from those causes which first gave rise to the social state: that is to say, from wants and arts of the first necessity, which indeed may be reckoned as essential elements in the formation of society.

"For, when men began to unite in society, they found it indispensably necessary to enlarge the means of their subsistence, and consequently to apply themselves to agriculture; but the practice of agriculture of course, required the observations and knowledge of the heavens.* It was absolutely requisite, therefore, to know the periodical return of the same operations of nature, of the same phenomena in the celestial regions; in a word, to regulate the duration and succes-

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they call destiny or *Fatum*, supposing a chain of causes and effects which binds, by I know not what connexion, all beings together, from the meanest atom to the supreme power and primary influence of the Gods; so that, whether in their temples or in their idols, the only subject of worship is the power of destiny. *Porphyr. Epist. ad Janebonem.*

* It continues to be repeated every day, on the indirect authority of the book of Genesis, that astronomy was the invention of the children of Noah. It has been gravely said, that while wandering shepherds in the plains of Shinar, they employed their leisure in composing a planetary system; as if shepherds had occasion to know more than the polar star, and if necessity was not the sole motive of every invention! If the ancient shepherds were so studious and sagacious, how does it happen that the modern ones are so stupid, ignorant, and inattentive? And it is a fact that the Arabs of the desert know not so many as six constellations, and understand not a word of astronomy.

sion of seasons, of months, and the year. It was necessity then, that prompted them to become acquainted with the course of the *sun*, which, in its *zodiacal* revolution, showed itself the first and supreme agent of the whole creation; and, in the next place, of the moon, which, by its various aspects, periodical changes, and returns, dispensed and regulated the distribution of time; finally, of the stars, and even of the planets, which, by their appearance and disappearance on the horizon and nocturnal hemisphere, formed the lesser divisions. In a word, it was necessary to establish an entire system of astronomy, to form an almanack; and the labour of this undertaking in a short time spontaneously gave birth to a new method of considering the over-ruling and governing powers. Having observed that there was a regular and constant correspondence betwixt the appearance of the heavenly bodies and that of the productions of the earth; that the *origin, growth* and *decay* of every plant, were accompanied with the appearance, ascension, and declination of the same planet, of the same groupe of stars; in short, that the languor or activity of vegetation seemed to depend on *celestial influences*, men began to conceive from this an idea of action, of power in those bodies over terrestrial beings; and hence the stars, the acknowledged dispensers of abundance or scarcity, became powers, Genii,* Gods, authors of good and evil.

* It appears that by the words genius, the ancients denoted a quality, a generative power, for the following words, which are all of one family, convey this meaning: generary, genos, genesis, genus, gens.

The Sabeans, ancient and modern, says Mamonides, acknowledge a principal God, the maker and inhabitant of heaven; but on account of his great distance they conceive him to be inaccessible; and in imitation of the conduct of people towards their kings, they employ as mediators with him, the planets and their angels, whom they call princes and potentates, and whom they suppose to reside in those luminous bodies as in palaces or tabernacles, &c. *More Nebuchin, pars 3. c. 29.*

"As the state of society had already introduced a methodical hierarchy of ranks, employments, and conditions, men, continuing to reason by comparison, transfused their newly acquired notions into their theology; and hence resulted a complicated system of *gradationary Divinities*, in which the *sun*, as the *first God*, was a military *chief*, a political *king*; the *moon*, a *queen*, his consort; the *planets*, servants, bearers of commands, messengers: and the multitude of *stars*, a nation, an *army* of heroes, *Genii*, appointed to govern the *world* under the direction of their officers; so that every individual had a name, office, and attributes, adapted to its supposed relations and influences, and even a sex derived from the gender of the noun by which it was appellatively distinguished.*

"As the state of society had introduced certain usages and complex practices, religious worship, leading the van, adopted similar ones. Ceremonies, of a simple and private nature at first, became public and solemn; the offerings were more rich and in greater number, rites more methodical: places of assembly, chapels, and temples were erected; persons were chosen to officiate in them: pontiffs and priests started up: devotional forms and times were settled; and thus religion became a civil act, a political tie. But in this state of progressive developement, it altered not its first principles; for, the idea of God was still the idea of *physical beings*, operating good or ill, that is to say,

* According to the gender of the object was in the language of the nation masculine or feminine, the Divinity who bore its name was male or female. Thus the Cappadocians called the moon God, and the sun Goddess; a circumstance which gives to the same beings a perpetual variety in ancient mythology.

impressing sensations of pleasure or pain: the *doctrinal* part was the knowledge of their *laws* or rules of conduct; *piety* and *sin* the observance or infringement of those laws; and *morality*, appearing in all its native simplicity, was a judicious practice of all that is *conducive to the preservation of existence; to the well-being of the individual and of his fellow-creatures.**

Should it be asked at what epoch this system took birth, we shall answer, supported by the authority of the monuments of astronomy itself, that its principles can be traced back with certainty to a period of nearly seventeen thousand years.† Should we farther be asked to what people or nation it ought to be attributed, we reply, that these self-same monuments, seconded by unanimous tradition, attribute it to the first tribes of Egypt. And, when human reason finds in that region a concurrence of all the physical circumstances

* We may add, says Plutarch, that these Egyptian priests always regarded the preservation of health as a point of the first importance, and as indispensably necessary to the practice of piety and the service of the Gods. See his account of *Isis and Osiris* towards the end.

† The historical orator follows here the opinion of M. Dupois, who, in his learned memoir concerning the origin of the constellations, has assigned many plausible reasons to prove that *Libra* was formerly the sign of the vernal, and *Aries* of the autumnal equinox; that is, that since the origin of the actual astronomical system, the precession of the equinoxes has carried forward by seven signs the primitive order of the Zodiac. Now estimating the precession at about seventy years and a half to a degree, that is, 2,115 years to each sign; and observing that *Aries* was in its fifteenth degree, 1,447 years before Christ, it follows that the first degree of *Libra* could not have coincided with the vernal equinox more lately than 15,194 years before Christ, to which if you add 1799 years since Christ, it appears that 16,993 have elapsed since the origin of the Zodiac. The vernal equinox coincided with the first degree of *Aries* 2,504 years before Christ, and with the first degree of *Taurus* 4,619 years before Christ. Now it is to be observed, that the worship of the Bull is the principal article in the theological creed of the Egyptians, Persians, Japanese, *&c.* from whence it clearly follows, that some general revolution took place among these nations at that time. The chronology of five or six thousand years in Genesis is little agreeable to this hypothesis; but as the book of Genesis cannot claim to be considered as a history farther back than Abraham, we are at liberty to make what arrangements we please in the eternity that preceded.

calculated to give rise to it: when it finds a zone in the vicinity of the tropic, equally free from the rains of the equator, and the fogs of the north*; when it finds there the central point of the antique sphere, a salubrious climate, an immense yet manageable river; a land fertile without art, without fatigue,—inundated, without pestilential exhalations: situate between two seas which wash the shores of the richest countries—it is forcibly impelled to conclude, that the inhabitant of the *Nile* inclined to *agriculture* from the nature of his soil; to *geometry*, from the annual necessity of measuring his possessions; to *commerce*, from the facility of communication; to *astronomy*, from the state of the sky ever open to observation, must first have passed from the *savage* to the social state, and consequently have attained that degree of physical and moral knowledge appropriated to civilized man.

"It was accordingly upon the upper shores of the Nile, and among a nation of a sable complexion, that the complex system of the worship of the *stars*, as relatively connected with the produce of the soil and the labours of agriculture, was constructed. And this first form of worship, characterised by the adoration of the stars under their natural forms, or their *natural attributes*, was a procedure of the human understanding perfectly simple; but, in a short time, the multiplicity of objects with their astrological relations, and their reciprocal agency, having rendered the ideas and the signs that represented them intricate and complex, a

* M. Bailli, in placing the first astronomers at Selingenskoy, near the Baikal, paid no attention to this twofold circumstance: it equally argues against their being placed at Axoum on account of the rains, and the *Zimb fly* of which Mr. Bruce speaks.

confusion ensued, which was as absurd in its nature, as pernicious in its tendency.

Sect. III. *Third System: Worship of Symbols, or Idolatry.*

"From the instant this race of agriculturalists had begun to make observations on the stars, they found it necessary to distinguish the individuals and groupes one from another, and to assign to each a proper name, in order to make themselves, by means of this nomenclature, intelligible one to another. But a considerable difficulty here presented itself; for, on the one hand, the celestial bodies, from their similarity of form, offered no peculiarity of character by which to denominate them; and, on the other hand, the poverty and infant state of the language, had no terms to express so many new and *metaphysical* ideas. Necessity, however, the usual incentive of genius surmounted all obstacles. Having remarked, that in the annual revolution, the renovation and periodical appearance of the productions of the earth, constantly *corresponded* with the *rising* and *setting* of certain stars, and with their position relatively to the sun, which they made the general rule of reference and comparison, the mind, by a natural mechanism, co-associated in its thoughts those terrestrial and celestial objects, which had in fact a certain species of alliance; and, applying to them one and the same sign, it gave to the *stars* and the *groupes* it form-

ed of them, the very identical names of those terrestrial objects, to which they bore affinity.*

"Thus, the Ethiopean of Thebes called stars of *inundation*, or of *Aquarius*, those under which the river began to overflow ;† *stars of the ox or bull*, those under which it was convenient to plough the earth; *stars of the lion*, those under which that animal, driven by thirst from the deserts, made his appearance on the banks of the Nile ; stars of the sheaf, or of the *harvest maid*, those under which the harvests were got in ; stars of the *lamb*, stars of the *kid*, those under which those valuable animals were brought forth; and thus a first part of the difficulty was obviated.

On the other hand, man having remarked in the beings that surrounded him certain distinctive qualities peculiar to each species, and having, in the first instance, derived a name from thence by which to designate them, discovered, in the second place, an ingenious mode of generalizing his ideas ; and, transferring the name already invented to every thing possessed of a similar or analogous property or agency, enriched his language with an inexhaustable fund of metaphors.

"Thus, the same *Ethiopian*, having observed that the return of the inundation was constantly attended with the appearance, at that time, of a very beautiful star towards the *source of the Nile*, which seemed to warn the husbandman against being suddenly surprised by the waters, compared this action with that of the animal, which, by barking, gives notice of danger ; and

* "The ancients," says Maimonides, "directing all their attention to agriculture, gave names to the stars derived from their occupation during the year." *More Neb. pars 3.*

† This must have been June.

accordingly called this star the *dog*, the *barker (Syrius.)* In the same manner, he called stars of the *crab* those, which showed themselves when the sun, having reached the bounds of the tropic, returned backwards and sideways like the *crab* or *Cancer ;* stars of the *wild goat*, those where the sun, being arrived at its *greatest altitude*, at the top of the horary *Gnomon*, imitated the action of that animal which delights in *climbing* to the top of the highest rocks; stars of the *balance*, those which, from the days and nights being of the same length, seemed to be in *equipoise*, like that instrument ; stars of the *scorpion*, those which were visible when certain regular winds brought a *hot vapour, burning* like the *poison* of the scorpion. Again, he called by the name of *rings* and *serpents* the figures of the orbits described by the stars and planets ;* and such was the general mode of appropriating apellations to all the heavenly bodies, taken singly or grouped in clusters, according to their connection with rural and terrestrial operations and the relative analogies which every nation found them to have with the labours of the field and the objects of their own soil and climate.

" The inevitable consequences of this mode of proceeding was, that abject and terrestrial beings entered into association with the *superior* and *powerful beings* of the heavens ; and this association became more and more rivetted every day by the very constitution of language and the mechanism of the mind. Men would accordingly say, by a natural metaphor :—" the bull disseminates upon the earth the germinating seeds of

* The ancients had verbs from the substantives *crab, goat, tortoise,* as the French have at present the verbs *serpenter coquetier.* The history of all languages is nearly the same.

fecundity (in spring,) and brings back abundance and the vegetative creation of plants (which afford nutricious food :)—The *lamb* (or *ram*) delivers the heavens from the *maleficent Genii* of winter ; he saves the *world* from the *serpent* (the emblem of the wet season,) and restores the reign of *good*, (that is, of the summer, the season of enjoyments :)—The *scorpion* pours out his venom upon the earth, and spreads disease and death, &c. :—and so on of all other effects of a similar nature."

" This language, understood by every body, was at first attended with no inconvenience ; but, in process of time, when the almanac had been regulated, the people, who had then no occasion for any further observation of the skies, lost sight of the motive which led to the adoption of these expressions ; and the allegory of them, still remainining in full force in the customary intercourse of life, became a fatal stumbling block to the understanding and to reason. Habituated to join to *symbols* the ideas of their *models*, the mind begun finally to confound them ; when those very animals, which the imagination had raised to heaven, re-descended upon the earth ; but, on their return, decked in the livery of the stars, they became invested with their attributes, and thereby imposed upon their own authors. The people then, imagining that they saw their Gods before them, found it a more easy task to offer up their prayers to them. They solicited the *ram* of their flock for the influence, for which they before petitioned the *celestial ram ;* they prayed to the *scorpion* not to pour out his venom upon Nature ; they revered the *crab* of the sea, the *beetle* or *scarab* of the mud, and

the *fish* of the river; and thus, by a concatenated series of false analogies, they bewildered themselves, by natural consequence, in a labyrinth of corresponding absurdities.

"Such was the origin of this *antique* and preposterous *worship* of *animals*; such the train of ideas by which the characteristic attributes of the Divinity became transferred to the meanest of the brute creation; and thus was formed the vast, complicated and learned *theological* system, which originating on the banks of the Nile, and thence conveyed from country to country by commerce, war, and conquest, at length overspread all the ancient world; and which, modified by time, by circumstances, and by prejudices, is still to be traced among a hundred nations, and is even at this day the radical and secret ground of the theology of those, who despise and reject it."

Hearing murmurs now excited in various groupes:—"'Tis true," continued the Speaker, "and I repeat the assertion. Yes, people of *Africa!* hence, for example, has arisen among you the adoration of your *Fetiches, plants, animals, pebbles, and bits of wood*, before which your ancestors would never have been so stupidly absurd as to prostrate themselves, if they had not looked upon them as *talismans*, endued with the virtues of the stars.*—Here too, ye nations of *Tartary!*

* The ancient astrologers, says the most learned of the Jews, (Maimonides) having sacredly assigned to each planet a colour, an animal, a tree, a medal, a fruit, a plant, formed from them all a figure or representation of the star, taking care to select for the purpose a proper moment, a fortunate day, such as the conjunction of the star, or some other favourable aspect. They conceived that by their magic ceremonies they could introduce into those figures or idols the influences of the superior beings after which they were modelled. These are the idols that the Chaldean-Sabeans adored; and in the performance of their worship they were obliged to be dressed in the proper colour. The astrologers, by their practices, thus introduced

here you may trace the origin of your *Pagods*, and of the whole train of animals with which your *Shamans* embellish their magic robes. From the same source likewise originate those *figures* of birds and serpents, which all the savage nations, with mystic and sacred ceremonies, imprint on their skin. It is in vain for you, ye people of *India !* to escape detection by screening yourselves under a veil of mystery: the *hawk* of your God *Vichenou* is but one of the thousand emblems of the *sun* in Egypt, and his incarnations under the form of a *fish*, a *boar*, a *lion*, and a *turtle*, together with all his monstrous adventures, are nothing more than the metamorphoses of the same star, which, passing successively through the signs of the *twelve animals*,* was said to assume their forms, and to act their astronomical parts.† Your *bull*, ye *Japanese !* which breaks *the egg of the world*, is merely that of the heavens, which, in times of yore, *opened the age of the creation*, the equinox of Spring. That same *bull* is

idolatry, desirous of being regarded as the dispensers of the favours of heaven; and as agriculture was the sole employment of the ancients, they succeeded in persuading them that the rain and other blessings of the seasons were at their disposal. Thus the whole art of agriculture was exercised by rules of astrology, and the priests made talismans or charms which were to drive away locusts, flies, *&c.* See *Maimonides, More, Nebuchin, pars* 3. *c.* 29.

The priests of Egypt, Persia, India, *&c.* pretended to bind the Gods to their idols, and to make them come from heaven at their pleasure. They threatened the sun and moon, if they were disobedient, to reveal the secret mysteries, to shake the skies, *&c. &c. Euseb. Præcep. Evang. p.* 198, *and Iamblicus de Mysteriis Ægypt.*

* Of the Zodiac.

† *The Sun was said to assume their forms and to act, &c.* (the forms of the twelve animals.) These are the very words of Iamblicus de Symbolis Ægyptiorum, c. 2, sect. 7. The sun was the grand Proteus, the universal metamorphist.

the *Apis* worshipped in Egypt, and which your ancestors, ye *Jewish Rabbins !* adored in the idol of the *golden calf.* It is also your bull, ye *Sons of Zoroaster !* which sacrificed in the symbolical mysteries of *Mithra,* shed a *fructifying blood* for the world. Nor has your *bull* of the Apocalypse, ye *Christians ! with* his wings, the *symbol* of *the air,* any other origin : your *lamb of God,* immolated, like the *bull of Mithra,* for the *salvation of the world,* is again the self-same *sun* in the sign of the *celestial ram,* which, in a subsequent age, opening in his turn the equinox, was said to rid the world of the reign of evil, that is to say, of the constellation of the serpent, of that *large snake,* the *mother of winter,* and emblem of the *Ahrimanes* or *Satan of the Persians,* your institutors. Yes, in vain does your imprudent zeal consign *idolaters* to the torments of *Tartarus* which they have invented : the whole ground of your system is nothing more than the worship of the *luminary of day,* whose attributes you have heaped upon your chief personage. It is the *sun,* that, under the name of *Orus,* was born, like your God, in the winter solstice in the arms of the *celestial virgin,* and passed through a childhood of obscurity, *nakedness* and *want,* answering to the season of cold and frost : It is the *sun* too, which under the name of *Osiris,* persecuted by *Typhon* and the *tyrants* of the air, was *put to death,* laid in a dark sepulchre, the emblem of the *hemisphere of winter,* and which, ascending afterwards from the *inferior zone* to the vertical point of the heavens, *rose again from the dead,* triumphing over the giants and the *destroying angels.*

" Yes, ye murmuring priests ! ye yourselves wear

its signs all over your bodies. Your *tonsure* is the *disk of the sun;* your *stole* its *Zodiac;** your *rosaries* the symbols of the stars and planets. Ye pontiffs and prelates! your *mitre*, your *crosier*, your *mantle*, are those of *Osiris;* and that *crucifix*, of which you boast the mystery with comprehending it, is the cross of *Serapis*, drawn by the hands of Egyptian priests on the plane of the figurative world, which, passing across the *equinoxes* and the *tropics*, became the emblem of *future life* and *resurrection*, because it reached to the *gates* of ivory and horn through which the soul was to pass in its way to heaven."

Here the theologians of the different groupes looked with silent astonishment one at another, but as none of them seemed disposed to speak, the orator proceeded:

"Three principal causes," continued he, "concurred in producing this confusion of ideas. First, the necessity, on account of the infant state of language, of making use of *figurative expressions* to depict the relations of objects; which expressions, passing afterwards from a particular to a general, from a physical, to a moral sense, occasioned by their equivocal import and synonymous terms, a multiplicity of misapprehensions and mistakes.

"Thus, having at first said, that the *sun surmounted*

* The Arabs, says Herodotus, shave their heads in a circle and about the temples, in imitation of Bacchus (that is the sun) who shaves himself, in this manner. Jeremiah speaks also of this custom. The tuft of hair which the Mahometans preserve, is taken also from the sun, who was painted by the Egyptians at the winter solstice, as having but a single hair on his head. . . . *Your stole its Zodiac.* The robes of the goddess of Syria and of Dianna of Ephesus, from whence are borrowed the dress of the priests, have the twelve animals of the Zodiac painted on them. . . *Rosaries* are found upon all the Indian idols, constructed more than four thousand years ago; and their use in the East has been universal from time immemorial. . . . The *crosier* is precisely the staff of Bootes or Osiris. All the Lamas wear the *mitre* or cap in the shape of a cone, which was an emblem of the sun.

and made his passage through the twelve animals, they afterwards supposed that he fought, subdued, and killed them; and out of this arose the historical life of *Hercules**.

"Having said that it regulated the periods of operations in husbandry, of seed-time, and of harvest; that it *distributed seasons* and employments, over-ran climates, ruled over the earth, and the like, it was taken for a *legislative king*, a *conquering warrior;* and hence were framed the stories of *Osiris*, of *Bacchus*, and others of a similar description.

"Having said that a planet entered into a sign, their conjunction was denominated a *marriage, adultery, incest:** having said, that it was hid, *buried*, when it was sunk below the horizon; when it came again to *light* and regained its state of *elevation*, they gave it the epithet of *risen from the dead, raised into heaven*, &c.

"The second cause of confusion was the material figures themselves, by which thoughts were originally painted, and which, under the name of *heiroglyphics*, or *sacred characters*, were the first invention of the mind. Thus, to give notice of the *inundation*, and the necessity of preserving one's-self from it, they painted a boat, the *vessel Argo;* to express the *wind*, they painted a *bird's wing;* to specify the season, the month, they delineated the *bird of passage*, the *insect*, or *animal*, which made its appearance at that

* See the Memoir on the origin of the *Constellations* by Mr. Dupuis.

† These are the very words of Plutarch in his account of Isis and Osiris. The Hebrews say, in speaking of the generations of the Patriarchs, *et ingressus est in eam.* From this continual equivoque of ancient language, proceeds every mistake.

particular period; to denote *winter*, they drew a *hog* or a *serpent*, which are fond of *moist and miry places*. The combination of these figures had also established meanings, and stood for words and sentences.*—But,

* The reader will doubtless see with pleasure some examples of ancient hieroglyphics.

"The Egyptians (says Hor-appolo) represent eternity by the figures of the sun and moon. They designate the world by the blue serpent with yellow scales (stars, it is the Chinese Dragon). If they were desirous of expressing the year, they drew a picture of Isis, who is also in their language called *Sothis*, or dog star, one of the first constellations by the rising of which the year commences: its inscription at Sais was, *It is I that rises in the constellation of the Dog*.

"They also represent the year by a palm tree, and the month by one of its branches, because it is the nature of this tree to produce a branch every month. They farther represent it by the fourth part of an acre of land." (The whole acre divided into four denotes the bissextile period of four years. The abbreviation of this figure of a field in four divisions, is manifestly the letter *ha* or *het*, the seventh in the Samaritan alphabet, and in general all the letters of the alphabet are merely astronomical hieroglyphics; and it is for this reason that the mode of writing is from right to left, like the march of the stars.)—"They denote a prophet by the image of a dog, because the dog star (*Anoubis*) by its rising gives notice of the inundation. *Noubi* in Hebrew signifies prophet. They represent inundation by a lion, because it takes place under that sign: and hence, says Plutarch, the custom of placing at the gates of temples figures of lions with water issuing from their mouths.—They express the idea of God and destiny by a star. They also represent God, says Porphyry, by a black stone, because his nature is dark and obscure. All white things express the celestial and luminous Gods: all circular ones the world, the moon, the sun, the destinies; all semicircular ones as bows and crescents, are all descriptive of the moon. Fire and the Gods of Olympus they represent by pyramids and obelisks: (the name of the sun *Baal* is found in this latter word): the sun by a cone (the mitre of Osiris): the earth, by a cylinder (which revolves:) the generative power of the air by the *phalus*, and that of the earth by a triangle, emblem of the female origin. *Euseb. Præcep. Evang. p.* 98.

"Clay, says Iamblicus de Symbolis, sect. 7. c. 2. denotes matter the generative and nutrimental power, every thing which receives the warmth and fermentation of life."

"A man sitting upon the *Lotos* or *Nenuphar*, represents the moving spirit (the sun) which, in like manner as that planet lives in the water without any communication with clay, exists equally distinct from matter, swimming in empty space, resting on itself: it is round also in all its parts, like the leaves, the flowers and the fruit of the Lotos. (Brama has the eyes of the Lotos, says Chaster Neadirson, to denote his intelligence: his eye swims over every thing, like the flower of the Lotos on the waters.) A man at the helm of a ship, adds Iamblicus, is descriptive of the sun which governs all. And Porphyry tells us that the sun is also represented by a man in a ship resting upon an amphibious crocodile, (emblem of the air and water.)

"At Elephantine they worshipped the figure of a man in a sitting posture, painted blue, having the head of a ram, and the horns of a goat which encompassed a disk; all which represented the sun and moon's conjunction at

as there was nothing fixed or determinate in this sort of language, and as the number of those figures and their combinations became excessive and over-burdensome to the memory, perplexities and false interpretations were the first and obvious result. Human *ingenuity* having, however, afterwards invented the more simple art of applying signs to sounds, of which the number is limited, and of painting speech instead of thoughts, *heiroglyphic pictures* were, by the introduction of *alphabetical writing* ;* brought into disuse;

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the sign of the ram; the blue colour denoting the power of the moon, at the period of junction, to raise water into clouds. *Euseb. Præceb. Evang. p.* 116.

"The hawk is an emblem of the sun and of light, on account of his rapid flight, and his soaring into the highest regions of the air where light abounds."

A fish is the emblem of aversion, and the *Hippopotamus* of violence, because it is said to kill its father and ravish its mother. Hence, says Plutarch, the emblematical inscription of the temple of Sais, where we see painted on the vestibule, 1. A child, 2. An old man, 3. A hawk, 4. A fish, 5. A hippopotamus: which signify, 1. Entrance into life, 2. Departure, 3. God, 4. Hatred, 5. Injustice. See *Isis and Osiris.*

"The Egyptians, adds he, present the world by a Scarabeus, because this insect pushes in a direction contrary to that in which it proceeds, a ball containing its eggs, just as the heaven of the fixed stars causes the revolution of the sun, the yolk of an egg, in an opposite direction to its own.

"They represent the world also by the number *five*, being that of the elements, which, says Diodorus, are earth, water, air, fire, and ether, or *spiritus.* The Indians have the same number of elements, and according to Macrobius's mystics, they are the supreme God, or *primum mobile*, the intelligence, or *mens*, born of him, the soul of the world which proceeds from him, the celestial spheres and all things terrestrial. Hence, adds Plutarch, the analogy between the Greek *pente*, five, and *pan* all.

"The ass," says he again, "is the emblem of Typhon, because like that animal he is of a redish colour. Now Typhon signifies whatever is of a mirey or clayey nature: (and in Hebrew I find the three words *clay, red,* and *ass* to be formed from the same root *hamr.*) Iamblicus has further told us that clay was the emblem of matter; and he elsewhere adds, that all evil and corruption proceeded from matter; which compared with the phrase of Macrobus, *all is perishable*, liable to change in the celestial sphere, gives us the theory, first physical, then moral, of the system of good and evil of the ancients."

* The antiquities of Egypt and Asia, prove their undoubted title to early civilization, and *that the method of embodying ideas was by hieroglyphics*, or drawing a representation of the bodies themselves—of which the *picture-writing* of the Mexicans is another instance.

and from day to day their forgotten significations made way for a vast variety of fallacies, equivocal acceptations, and mistakes.

"Again, a third cause of confusion proceeded from the civil organization of ancient states. In fact, when the people began to apply themselves to agriculture, the formation of the rural calendar requiring continual astronomical observations, it was necessary to nominate particular persons, whose province it should be to notice the appearance and setting of certain stars, to give intimation of the return of the inundation, of particular winds and periodical rains, and of the proper time for sowing every species of grain. These men, on account of their services, were exempted from vulgar occupations, and society provided for their subsistence. In this situation, solely engaged in making observations, they soon became acquainted with the leading phenomena of nature, and even gained an insight into many of her more secret operations. They

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The introduction of *alphabetical writing* like most things of high antiquity, has been supposed of divine origin. The cabalistical doctors of the Jews maintain that it was one of *the things* which God created on the evening of the Sabbath. *Pliny* says it was derived from the Gods.

It has been ascribed to *Moses*, to *Cadmus*, and the *Phœnicians*, to the *Chaldeans*, to the *Syrians*, to the *Indians*, &c. Egypt has been complimented as "The Mother of the Arts," whilst she seems to have derived her knowledge from Asia. In some of the *Shanscrit* books, the Egyptians are constantly described as disciples.

The country between the *Indus* and the *Ganges*, still preserves the Shanscrit language in its original purity, and offers a great number of writings to the perusal of the curious; among which one of the sacred books of the GENTOOS, called *Bagavadam*, claims an antiquity of more than 5000 years. Egypt seems to have borrowed *alphabetical writing* from Asia, Greece from Egypt, and Rome from Greece.

There are seven different sorts of *Indian alphabetical writing*, all named *Naagoree*—the elegant Shanscrit, is stiled *Dael-Naagoree*, or the "*Writing of the Immortals.*" It does not appear, however, that all knowledge of *alphabetical writing* was derived from Asia—different nations, seem to have attained sufficient civilization to form alphabets for themselves; for several of these have no connection with one another.

learned the course of the stars and the planets; the analogy and connection which their various aspects, disappearance, and return had with the productions of the earth and the progress of vegetation; the medicinal and nutritive properties of fruits and plants: the general action of the elements, and their reciprocal affinities. Now, as there were no means of communicating this knowledge otherwise than by the tedious and operosé one of oral instruction, they transmitted it only to their friends and kindred; and hence all knowledge and science became concentrated in certain families, who, monopolizing within themselves this exclusive privilege of instruction, assumed a kind of *corporate* and *separate* capacity fatal to the public weal. By this continued succession of the same train of elaborate investigations and enquiries, the progress of knowledge, it is true, was expedited, but, from the mystery that accompanied it, the people, daily involved in a thicker cloud of darkness, became more and more superstitious and enslaved. Seeing human beings produce certain phenomena, *announce*, as it were at will, eclipses and comets, cure diseases, and handle noxious serpents, they supposed them to have preternatural intercourse with *celestial powers*;* and, in order to obtain good fortune, or to have the ills adverted which they expected from those powers, they accordingly adopted these extraordinary personages as their *mediators* and *interpreters*. And thus were estab-

* Knavery would not fail to take advantage of credulity. Among the Indians (from whom the Egyptians, &c. probably transmitted to us many superstitions as well as arts.) The Bramins, by means of *judicial astrology*, as it is called, have made themselves the arbiters of good and evil hours, which gives them great authority: they are consulted as oracles, and by the price of the responses procure much wealth.

lished in the very bosom of states *sacrilegious corporations* of *hypocrites* and *impostors*, who engrossed to themselves every kind of power; and thus the *priests*, being at once both *astronomers, divines, naturalists, physicians, necromancers, interpreters of the Gods, oracles of the people, and rivals of kings or their accomplices*, founded, under the name of *religion*, an *empire of mystery*, and *a monopoly of knowledge*, which to this very hour have been the bane of the nations of the earth." . . . . .

On uttering these words, the priests of all the groupes interrupted the orator; and with loud vociferations accused him of impiety, irreligion, and blasphemy, and would have prevented him from proceeding: but the legislators having observed, that what he was relating was merely a *detail of historical events*; that, if those events were false or fabricated, it would be an easy matter to controvert and prove them to be erroneous; and, that unless every one were equally allowed the liberty of declaring his *opinion*, pursuant to the plan already adhered to, it would be impossible to come at truth:—whereupon he was permitted to go on.

"From all these causes," continued the Speaker, "and from the perpetual association of discordant ideas, there followed a strange medley of confusion in theology, morality, and tradition. And first, because the stars were figuratively represented by animals, the qualities of the brute creation, their passions, their sympathies, and antipathies were eventually transferred to the Gods, and supposed to be their actions. Thus, the God *Ichneumon* made war upon the God *croco-*

dile; the God *wolf* longed to prey upon the God *sheep;* the God *stork* devoured the God *serpent;* and hence the Deity became a most *preposterous, fantastic,* and *ferocious* being, the idea of which embarrassed and confounded the judgment of man, and corrupted at once both his morals and his reason.

"Again, as every family, every nation, had, from the natural cast and tendency of their worship, adopted a particular star or *constellation* for its tutelary *patron,* the instinctive affections and antipathies of the *emblematical brute* were transferred to its votaries; and thus the partisans of the God *dog* were enemies to those of the God *wolf;* the worshippers of the God *bull* held those in the utmost abhorrence who fed upon beef; and hence religion became a fruitful source of feuds and animosities, and the cause of the wildest frenzy and superstition.*

"Moreover, the names of the *animal-stars,* having, by the very consequence of this patronage been conferred on nations, countries, mountains, and rivers, those objects were accordingly taken for Gods; and hence there arose a medley of geographical, historical, and mythological beings, by which all tradition was effectually involved in confusion.

"Lastly, from the *planetary Gods* having been taken for *men, heroes,* and *kings,* by the analogy of the actions attributed to them, kings and heroes took, in their turn, the actions of the *Gods* for their models, and became, from imitation, warlike, conquering, sanguina-

* These are properly the words of Plutarch, who relates that those various worships were given by a king of Egypt to the different towns to disunite and enslave them, and these kings had been taken from the cast of priests. See *Isis and Osiris.*

ry, proud, lascivious, and indolent; and thus religion consecrated the crimes of despots, and perverted the principles of governments.

Sect. IV. *Fourth System: Worship of two principles, or Dualism.*

"Meanwhile the astronomical priests, enjoying in their temples peace and abundance, were daily making fresh progress in the sciences; and the *mundane system* gradually opening to their view, various *hypotheses* as to its agents and effects were successively started, which became so many *systems of theology*.

"The navigators of the *maritime nations*, and the caravans of the Asiatic and African *Nomades*, having, in the first place, given them a knowledge of the earth from the *Fortunate Islands* to *Serica*, and from the Baltic to the sources of the Nile, they discovered, by a comparison of the phœnomena of the different Zones, the *rotundity* of the globe, which gave rise to a new theory. Observing that all the operations of Nature, during the annual period, were resolvable into *two principal* ones, that of producing and that of destroying; that, upon the major part of the surface of the globe, the term of each of these operations lasted from one equinox to the other; that is to say, during the six summer months all was in a state of procreation and growth, and during the six winter months all was in a state of languor and decay, wearing the dormant appearance of death,—they supposed *two contrary powers* in nature, always struggling with and resisting each other; and, considering the celestial sphere in the same view, they divided the drawings, by which they

represented it, into two equal portions or hemispheres, so that those constellations which appeared in the summer-heaven formed a *direct and superior empire*, and those in the winter-heaven an *opposite and inferior one*. Now, as the summer constellations were accompanied with the season of long, warm, and unclouded days together with that of fruitage and harvests, they were characterized as the *powers of light, fecundity, and creation*; and, by transition from a physical to a moral sense, as *Genii, angels* of science, beneficence, purity, and virtue:—in like manner, as the winter constellations, were attended with long nights and the polar fogs, they were regarded as genii of darkness, destruction, and death; and, by a similar kind of transition, as angels of wickedness, ignorance, sin and vice. By this mode of arrangement, heaven was divided into two dominions, two factions; and the analogy of human ideas already opened a vast field for the excursions of imagination; but a particular circumstance determined, if it did not occasion the mistake and illusion.

"In the projection of the celestial sphere, as drawn by the astronomical priests,* the Zodiac and the con-

* The ancient priests had three kinds of spheres, which it may be useful to make known to the reader.

"We read in Eusebius," says Porphyry, "that Zoroaster was the first who, having fixed upon a cavern pleasantly situated in the mountains adjacent to Persia, formed the idea of consecrating it to Mithra (the sun) creator and father of all things: that is to say, having made in this cavern several geometrical divisions, representing the seasons and the elements, he imitated on a small scale the order and disposition of the universe by Mithra. After Zoroaster, it became a custom to consecrate caverns for the celebration of mysteries: so that in like manner as temples were dedicated to the Gods, rural altars to heroes and terrestrial deities, &c. subterraneous abodes to infernal deities, so caverns and grottoes were consecrated to the world, to the universe, and to the nymphs: and from hence Pythagoras and Plato borrowed the idea of calling the earth a cavern, a cave, *de Antre Nympharum.*"

Such was the first projection of the sphere in relief; though the Persians gave the honour of the invention to Zoroaster, it is doubtless due to the

stellations disposed in a circular form, presented their two equal portions or halves in diametrical opposition: the winter hemisphere, the *Antipode* of that of summer, was accordingly adverse, contrary, opposed. These words, by a constant metaphor, assumed a moral sense; and the adverse angels and genii became *rebels* and *enemies*.* From that period the whole astronomical history of the constellations was converted into a political history; and the heavens became a human government, where every thing was conducted in the same manner as upon earth. Now, as the existing

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Egyptians; for we may suppose from this projection being the most simple that it was the most ancient; the caverns of Thebes, full of similar pictures, tend to strengthen this opinion.

The following was the second projection: "The prophets or hierophants," says Bishop Synnesius, "who had been initiated in the mysteries, do not permit the common workmen to form idols or images of the Gods; but they descend themselves into the sacred caves, where they have concealed coffers containing certain spheres upon which they construct those images secretly and without the knowledge of the people, who despise simple and natural things and wish for prodigies and fables." (Syn in Calvit.) That is, the ancient priests had armillary spheres like ours; and this passage, which so well agrees with that of Chæremon, gives us the key to all their theological astrology.

Lastly, they had flat models of the nature of plate II. with this difference, that they were of a very complicated nature, having every fictitious division of decan and sub-decan, with the hieroglyphic signs of their influence. Kircher has given us a copy of one of them in his Egyptian Œdipus, and Gybelin a figured fragment in his book of the calendar (under the name of the Egyptian Zodiac.) The ancient Egyptians, says the astrologer Julius Firmicus, (Astron. lib. ii. and lib. iv. c. 16.) divide each sign of the Zodiac into three sections; and each section was under the direction of an imaginary being, whom they called decan or chief of ten; so that there were three decans a month, and thirty-three a year. Now these decans, who were also called Gods (*Thoi*) regulated the destinies of mankind—and they were placed particularly in certain stars. They afterwards imagined in every ten three other Gods, whom they called arbiters; so that there were nine for every month, and these were farther divided into an infinite number of powers. (The Persians and Indians made their spheres on similar plans; and if a picture thereof were to be drawn from the description given by Scaliger at the end of Manilius, we should find in it a complete explanation of their hieroglyphics, for every article forms one.)

* It was for this reason the Persians always wrote the name of Ahrimanes inverted thus: ·seuɯıuɥy

states, for the most part despotic, had their monarchs, and as the sun was the apparent sovereign of the skies, the *summer hemisphere, (empire of light,)* and its constellations (a nation of *white angels,)* had for king an *enlightened, intelligent, creative, benign* God; and, as every rebellious faction must have its chief, the *hemisphere of winter (the subterraneous empire of gloomy darkness and melancholy,)* together with its stars, (a nation of *black angels, giants,* or *demons,)* had, for leader, a *maleficent* Genius, whose character was personated by that star which was most remarkably distinguished and most attracted the notice of different countries. In Egypt it was originally the *Scorpion,* the first sign of the Zodiac after the Balance, and for a long time chief of the wintry signs: then it was the *bear* or the polar *ass,* called *Typhon,* that is to say, *deluge,** on account of the rains by which the earth was inundated during the reign of that star. In *Persia,* at a subsequent period,† it was the *serpent,* which, under the name of *Ahrimanes,* constituted the basis of

* Typhon, pronounced Touphon by the Greeks, is precisely the *Touphan* of the Arabs, which signifies deluge; and these deluges in mythology are nothing more than winter and the rains, or the overflowing of the Nile; as their pretended fires which are to destroy the world, are simply the summer season. And it is for this reason that Aristotle (*De Meteor lib.* 1. *c.* xiv.) says, that the winter of the great cycle year is a deluge; and its summer a conflagration. "The Egyptians," says Poryhyry, "employ every year a talisman in remembrance of the world; at the summer solstice they mark their houses, flocks and trees with red, supposing that on that day the whole world had been set on fire. It was also at the same period that they celebrated the pyrrid, or fire dance." (And this illustrates the origin of purification by fire and by water; for having denominated the tropic of Cancer the gate of heaven, and the genial heat of celestial fire, and that of Capricorn the gate of deluge or of water, it was imagined that the spirit or souls who passed through these gates in their way to and from heaven, were *roasted* or *bathed:* hence the baptism of Mithra, and the passage through flames, observed throughout the East long before Moses.)

† That is when the ram became the equinoxial sign, or rather when the alteration of the skies shewed that it was no longer the bull.

the system of *Zoroaster;* and it is the very same, Ye *Christians* and *Jews!* that is become your *serpent of Eve* (the celestial Virgin,) and that of the *cross*, in both cases the emblem of *Satan the enemy*, the great *adversary* of the *Ancient of Days*, celebrated by *Daniel.* In *Syria* it was the *hog* or *wild boar*, the enemy of *Adonis*, because in that country, the character supported by the *Northern bear* was personated by the animal whose fondness for mire and dirt was emblematical of winter. And it is for this reason, Ye Sons of Moses and of Mahomet, that you hold this animal in abhorrence, in imitation of the priests of *Memphis* and of *Balbec*, who detested in him the murderer of their God the *sun.* This, Ye Indians! is likewise the prototype of your *Chib-en*, which was heretofore the *Pluto* of your brethen the Greeks and Romans; your *Brama* also (the God of creation,) is only the Persian *Ormuzd*, and the *Osiris* of Egypt, whose very name expresses a creative power, producer of forms. And these Gods were worshipped in a manner analogous to their real or fictitious attributes; and this worship, on account of the difference of these attributes, was divided into two distinct branches. In the one, the *benign God* received a worship of joy and love; whence are derived all religious acts of a gay or gladsome nature,* festivals, dances, banquets, offerings of flowers, milk, honey, perfumes; in a word, of every thing that delights the senses and the soul. In the other, the *malign God*, on the contrary received a worship of fear

* All the ancient festivals respecting the return and exaltation of the sun were of this description: hence the *hilaria* of the Roman calendar at the period of the passage, Pascha, of the vernal equinox. The dances were imitations of the march of the planets. Those of the Dervises still represent it to this day.

and sadness; whence originated all religious acts of the dolesome kind,* weeping, wailing, mourning, self-denial, blood-offerings, and cruel sacrifices.

"From the same source proceeded the division of terrestrial beings into pure and impure, sacred or abominable, according as their species was found among the respective constellations of one or other of the two Gods, and made a part of their domains. This produced, on the one hand, the superstitions of pollutions and purifications; and, on the other, the pretended efficacy and virtues of amulets and talismans.

"You now discern," continued he, addressing himself to the Hindoos, Persians, Jews, Christians, and Mussulmen,—"you now discern the origin of those ideas of *warring conflicts* and *rebellion*, which equally pervade your respective mythologies. You perceive what is meant by white and black angels; by the *Cherubs and Seraphs with the head of an eagle, a lion, or a bull:* the *Deus, devils or demons with horns of goats, and tails of snakes;* the thrones and dominions, ranged in seven orders or gradations, like the seven planetary spheres; all these beings personating and performing the same characters, and partaking of the same attributes in the Vedas, the Bible, and the Zend-

* "Sacrifices of blood," says Porphyry, "were only offered to Demons and evil Genii, to avert their wrath. Demons are fond of blood, humidity, stench." *Apud. Euseb. Prap. Ev. p.* 173.

"The Egyptians," says Plutarch, "only offer bloody victims to Typhon. They sacrifice to him a red ox, and the animal immolated is held in execration, and loaded with all the sins of the people." The goat of Moses. See *Isis and Osiris.*

Division of terrestrial beings into pure and impure, sacred or abominable. Strabo says, speaking of Moses and the Jews, "Circumcision and the prohibition of certain kinds of meat sprung from superstition." And I observe respecting the ceremony of circumcision, that its object was to take, from the symbol of Osiris, (*Phallus*) the pretended obstacle to fecundity; an obstacle which bore the seal of Typhon, "whose nature," says Plutarch "is made up of all that *hinders, opposes, causes obstruction.*"

avesta, whether their chief be *Ormuzd* or *Brama*, *Typhon* or *Chib-en*, *Michael* or *Satan*; whether their form be that of giants with an hundred arms and with feet of serpents, or that of Gods metamorphosed into lions, storks, bulls, and cats, as they appear in the sacred tales of the Greeks and Egyptians: you perceive the successive pedigree and genealogy of these ideas, and how, in proportion as they receded from their respective sources, and as the mind of man became more refined, their rude and grosser forms assumed a more improved and polished aspect, and were reduced to a state less uncouth and revolting.

"But, just as the system of two opposite principles or deities originated in that of symbols, which were interwoven with the whole of its contexture, so in like manner you will find a new system spring out of this, to which it served in its turn as a foundation and a step-ladder."

Sect. V. *Mystical or moral worship, or the system of a future state.*

"In fact, no sooner had the vulgar heard speak of a new heaven and another world, than they began to give a body to these fictions; their imagination materialized and erected its own self-conceptions of these into a solid stage with all the concomitant imagery and dramatical scenes of real life: and their notions of geography and astronomy served to favour, if not to give rise to the illusion.

"On the one hand, the Phenecian navigators, who passed the pillars of Hercules to fetch the tin of *Thule*

and the amber of the *Baltic*, related that at the extremity of the world, at the utmost boundary of the ocean (the Mediterranean,) where the sun is observed in the countries of Asia to set, there were fortunate islands, the residence of an everlasting spring; and, at a farther distance, *hyperborean regions*, placed under the earth (relatively to the tropics,) where an eternal night reigned.* Out of these relations, ill understood, and no doubt confusedly stated, the imagination of the people framed the Elysian Fields,† delightful regions situated in a lower world, having their heaven, their sun and their stars; and Tartarus, a place of darkness, wet, mire, and chilling frost. Now, inasmuch as mankind, inquisitive about every thing of which they are ignorant, and eagerly desirous of a prolongation of existence, had already questioned themselves respecting what was to become of them after death;—inasmuch as they had early reasoned upon that principle of life which animates the body, and which quits it without changing the form of the body, and had conceived to themselves subtile substances, phantoms, and shades, they flattered themselves with the belief, that they should resume in the subterranean world that life which was too precious to lose; and thus the *infernal regions* appeared a commodious place of reception for those dearly beloved objects which they could not prevail on themselves to renounce.

"On the other hand, the astrological and philosophical priests gave descriptions of their heavens, and constructed tables of them that perfectly quadrated with

* Nights of six months duration.

† *Aliz* in the Phenecian or Hebrew language signifies dancing and joyous.

these fictions. Having, in their metaphorical language, denominated the equinoxes and solstices the gates of heaven or the entrances of the seasons, they explained the terrestrial phenomena by saying, that through the gate of horn (at first the Bull, afterwards the Ram,) and through that of Cancer, descended the vivifying fires which, in spring, gave life to vegetation; and the aqueous spirits, which caused, at the solstice, the overflowing of the Nile: that through the gate of ivory (the Balance, originally the Bow or Sagittarius,) and through that of Capricorn or the urn, the emanations or influences of the heavens returned to their source and reascended to their origin. And the Milky Way, which passed through these gates of the solstices, seemed to them to have been placed there on purpose to serve as a road and conveyance for them.* The celestial scene farther presented, according to their Atlas, a *river* (the Nile, designated by the windings of the *Hydra;)* together with a barge *(the vessel Argo,)* and the *dog Sirius,* both referring to that river, the overflowing of which they foreboded. These circumstances combined with the preceding ones, by supplying additional details, gave greater weight to the probability of the fiction; and thus, to arrive at Tartarus or Elysium, souls were obliged to cross the rivers *Styx* and *Acheron,* in the boat of *Charon* the ferryman, and to pass through the gates of horn or ivory, which were guarded by the mastiff *Cerberus.* At length, the introduction of a civil practice, connected with all these fictions, gave full stability to them.

"The inhabitants of Egypt having remarked that the

* See *Macrob. Som. Scip.* c. 12.

putrefaction of dead bodies became, in their sultry climate, the source of pestilence and diseases, introduced in a great number of states, the custom of burying the dead, at a distance from the inhabited districts, in the desert situate at the West. To arrive there, it was necessary to cross the canals of the river, to engage a passage in a boat and to pay a toll to the ferryman, otherwise the body, deprived of the privilege of being buried, would have been left a prey to wild beasts. This custom suggested to her civil and religious legislators a powerful means of influencing the manners of her inhabitants; and, strongly impressing on rude and uncultivated minds the awful duties of filial piety and reverence for the dead, they ordained, as a conditional and necessary prelude, that a formal process of inquisition should first be gone through, whereupon judgment should be awarded, whether the deceased merited to be admitted to the rank of his family in the *dark city*. Such an idea too well accorded with all the rest not to be incorporated with them; nor was it long before they became co-associated in the minds of the people: and hell had accordingly its *Minos* and its *Rhadamanthus*, with the wand, the bench, the tipstaffs, and the urn, after the exact model of this worldly and civil transaction. The Divinity then became a moral and political being, a legislator in society, the more formidable, inasmuch as this supreme law-giver, this final judge was inaccessible to inspection.—This *mythological and fabulous World*, compounded of such strange and grotesque, such widely scattered and discordant parts, then became a place of future punishment and reward, in which divine justice was supposed

to correct the vices and defects of this transitory state. And this spiritual and mystical system acquired the more credit, as it gained the ascendency over mankind by falling in with their natural inclinations. The feeble victim of oppression looked thither for an indemnification, and consoled himself with the hope of future revenge: the oppressor, expecting by a profusion of rich offerings, to secure to himself a lasting exemption from punishment hereafter, made use at the same time of this hypothetical creed as an additional instrument of terror to controul and keep the vulgar in awe: kings and priests, the heads of the people, saw in it a new source of despotic power by reserving to themselves the exclusive privilege of dispensing the retributions and the chastisements of the great judge apportioned to the merits or demerits of human actions, which, however they represented and modified according to their own sovereign will and pleasure.

"Such were the means, by which an invisible and imaginary world became superadded to that which was visible and real:—Such, Ye *Persians*, was the origin of those regions of delight and of affliction, on which you have founded the notions of your rejuvenescent earth, your city of resurrection placed under the equator, and distinguished from all other cities by this singular attribute, that the bodies of its inhabitants cast no shade.*—Such, O *Jews* and *Christians*, the disci-

* There is on this subject a passage in Plutarch, so interesting and explanatory of the whole of this system, that we shall cite it entire. Having observed that the theory of good and evil had at all times occupied the attention of philosophers and theologians, he adds: "Many suppose there to be two Gods of opposite inclinations, one delighting in good, the other in evil; the first of these is called particularly by the name of God, the second by that of Genius or Demon. Zoroaster has denominated them Oromaze and Ahrimanes, and has said that of whatever falls under the cognizance of

ples of the *Persians*, such was the source of your *new Jerusalem* of the Apocalypse, of your *paradise*, and your *heaven*, characterised by all the details of the astrological heaven of Hermes.—Again, your hell, O ye *Mussulmen*, a subterraneous abyss, with a bridge extending across it, your balance of souls and of their works, your judgment pronounced by the angels *Monkir* and *Nekir*, all equally derive their outline from the mysterious ceremonies of the cave of Mithra;* and

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our senses, light is the best representation of the one, and darkness and ignorance of the other. He adds, that Mithra is an intermediate being, and it is for this reason the Persians called Mithra the *mediator* or *inter-mediator*. Each of these Gods has distinct plants and animals consecrated to him: for example, dogs, birds, and hedge-hogs belong to the good Genius, and all equatic animals to the evil one.

"The Persians also say, that Oromaze was born or formed out of the purest light; Ahrimanes, on the contrary, out of the thickest darkness; that Oromaze made six Gods as good as himself, and Ahrimanes opposed to them six wicked ones: that Oromaze afterwards multiplied himself threefold (Hermes trismegistus,) and removed to a distance as remote from the sun as the sun is remote from the earth; that he there formed stars, and among others, Syrius, which he placed in the heavens as a guard and centinel. He made also twenty-four other Gods, which he enclosed in an egg; but Ahrimanes created an equal number on his part, who broke the egg, and from that moment good and evil were mixed (in the universe.) But Ahrimanes is one day to be conquered, and the earth to be made equal and smooth, that all men may live happy.

"Theopompus adds, from the books of the Magi, that one of these Gods reigns in turn every three-thousand years, during which the other is kept in subjection; that they afterwards contend with equal weapons during a similar portion of time, but that in the end the evil Genius will fall (never to rise again.) Then men will become happy and their bodies cast no shade. The God who mediates all these things, reclines at present in repose, waiting till he shall be pleased to execute them." See Isis and Osiris.

There is an apparent allegory through the whole of this passage. The egg is the fixed sphere, the world; the six Gods of Oromaze are the six signs of summer, those of Ahrimanes the six signs of winter. The forty-eight other Gods are the forty-eight constellations of the ancient sphere, divided equally between Ahrimanes and Oromaze. The office of Syrius, as guard and centinel, tells us that the origin of these ideas was Egyptian: finally, the expression that the earth is to become equal and smooth, and that the bodies of happy beings are to cast no shade, proves that the equator was considered as their true paradise.

*In the caves which priests every where constructed, they celebrated mysteries which consisted (says Origen against Celsus) in imitating the motion of the stars, the planets and the heavens. The initiated took the name

your heaven also is an exact resemblance of that of Osiris, Ormuzd, and Brama."

SECT. VI. *Sixth System: The animated world, or worship of the universe under different emblems.*

"WHILE nations were bewildering themselves in the dark mazes of mythology and fable, the philosophical priests, pursuing their studies and researches into the order and arrangement of the universe, made new discoveries, and framed new systems of powers and moving causes.

"Long confined to simple appearances, they had only seen in the motion of the stars an unintelligible orderly course of luminous bodies, which they supposed to revolve round the earth, as the central point of all the spheres; but from the moment they had discovered the rotundity of the terraqueous globe, the consequences of this leading fact led them to other considerations, and by proceeding inductively from inference to inference, they arose at length to the sublimest notions of astronomy and physics.

"Accordingly, having conceived the brilliant and simple idea, that the *terraqueous globe is a smaller*

of constellations, and assumed the figures of animals. One was a lion, another a raven, and a third a ram. Hence the use of masks in the first representation of the drama. See Ant. Devoile, vol. ii. p. 244. "In the mysteries of Ceres the chief in the procession called himself the creator; the bearer of the torch was denominated the sun; the person nearest to the altar, the moon; the herald or deacon, Mercury. In Egypt there was a festival in which the men and women represented the year, the age, the seasons, the different parts of the day, and they walked in procession after Bacchus. Athen. lib. v. ch. 7. In the cave of Mithra was a ladder with seven steps, representing the seven spheres of the planets, by means of which souls ascended and descended. This is precisely the ladder in Jacob's vision, which shows that at that epocha the whole system was formed. There was in the French king's library a superb volume of pictures of the Indian Gods, in which the ladder is represented with the souls of men mounting it."

circle inscribed in the larger circle of the heavens, the theory of *concentrical circles* naturally presented itself in aid of their hypothesis to resolve the unknown circle of the terraqueous globe by the known points of the celestial circle ; and the measurement of one or more degrees of the meridian gave precisely the total circumference. Then, taking for his compasses the given diameter of the earth, a fortunate genius opened them and described with a masterly and bold hand the immense orbits of the heavens ; and hence, by a most stupendous and prodigious effort of the understanding, the diminutive creature man, extending his comprehensive views from the solitary grain of sand, which he himself is little more than able to cover, to the infinite distances of the stars, launched forth and explored the abyss of space and of time. A new system of the universe now presented itself to his notice, of which the little atom of a globe that he inhabited no longer appeared to him to be the centre : the important function before allotted to this was accordingly transferred to the enormous mass of the sun, which became the inflamed pivot or axis of *eight surrounding spheres*, the movements of which were from this moment reduced to exact calculation.*

" The human mind had already done a great deal by undertaking to ascertain the disposition and order of the great beings of NATURE ; but, not contented with this first achievement, it wished also to dive into its mechanism, and to find out its origin and motive principle.—And here it is that, absorbed in the abstract and

* Consult the ancient astronomy of M. Bailly, and you will find our assertions respecting the knowledge of the priests amply proved.

metaphysical depths of motion and its first cause, of the inherent or communicated properties of matter, of its successive forms, of its extent, or, in other words, of boundless space and time, these philosophizing divines puzzled and bewildered themselves in a vortex of subtle ratiocination and scholastic controversy.

"The action of the sun upon terrestrial bodies, having first led them to consider its substance as a pure and elementary fire, they made it the focus and reservoir of an ocean of igneous or luminous fluid, which, under the name of *æther*, filled the universe, and gave nourishment to all beings. They were afterwards led, by the analytical investigations of an enlightened philosophy, to the detection of this fire, or of one perfectly analogous to it, in the composition of all bodies, and perceiving that it was the essential and grand agent in that spontaneous motion, which in animals is denominated life, and in plants vegetation, they regarded the operations and mechanism of the universe in the light of an homogeneous WHOLE, of *one and the same body, whose parts, though distant from each other, had notwithstanding an intimate connection,* and the world as a living Being*, animated by the organical circulation of an igneous or rather electrical fluid,† which, by an analogy, borrowed from men and animals, was supposed to have the sun for its heart or focus.‡

* These are the very words of Iamblicus, de Myst. Ægypt.

† The more I consider what the ancients understood by ether, and spirit, and what the Indians called *akuche*, the stronger do I find the analogy between it and the electrical fluid. A luminous fluid, principle of warmth and motion, pervading the universe, forming the matter of the stars, having small round particles, which insinuate themselves into bodies, and fill them by dilating itself, be their extent what it will, what can more strongly resemble electricity?

‡ Natural philosophers, says Macrobius, call the sun the heart of the world. Som. Scip. c. 20. The Egyptians, says Plutarch, call the East the

" Accordingly, among the theological philosophers, some set out from these principles as the result of observation :—" That nothing is annihilated in the world; that the elements are indestructible; that they change their combinations, but not their nature; that *the life* and death of beings are nothing more than the varied modifications of the same atoms; that matter possesses self-dependent properties, from which originate all its mode of existing; that the world is eternal,* having no bounds either of space or duration :"—Some again maintained,—" that God was the *whole universe;* and that *He was at once both effect and cause, agent and patient, moving principle and thing moved,* that the unalterable properties, which constitute fatality or physical pre-destination, are his Law, and they depicted their idea sometimes by the emblem of PAN (the GREAT WHOLE ;) or of *Jupiter,* with a *starry* front, a *planetary* body, and *feet of animals ;*† or by the symbol of the *Orphic egg,* whose *yolk* suspended in the middle of a liquid enclosed around by a vaulted concavity or ceiling, represented the *globe* of the *sun* swimming in *æther* in the middle of the vault or canopy of heaven ;‡

face, the North the right side, and the South the left side of the world, because there the heart is placed. They continually compare the universe to a man; and hence the celebrated microcosm of the Alchymists. We observe by the by, that the Alchymists, Cabalists, Free-masons, Magnetisers, Martinists, and every other such sort of visionaries, are but the mistaken disciples of this ancient school: we say mistaken, because, in spite of their pretensions, the thread of the occult science is broken.

* See the Pythagorean Ocellus Lucanus.

† Vide Œdip. Ægypt. tom. II. page 205.

‡ This comparison of the sun with the yolk of an egg refers; 1. To its round and yellow figure; 2. To its central situation; 3. To the germ or principle of life contained in the yolk. May not the oval form of the egg allude to the elipsis of the orbs? I am inclined to this opinion. The word Orphic offers a farther observation. Macrobius says, Som. Scip. c. 14. and

sometimes by the emblem of a large round serpent, figurative of the heavens, where they placed the first principle of motion, and for that reason of an azure colour, spangled with gold spots (the stars,) and devouring his tail, that is, re-entering or returning into himself by winding continually round like the revolutions of the spheres; sometimes by the emblem of a man, with his feet locked and tied together to denote immutable existence, covered with a mantle of all colours, like the face of nature, and supporting on his head a sphere of gold,* representative of the planetary sphere; or by that of another man sometimes seated upon the flowers of the *Lotos* borne upon the watery abyss, at others, reposing upon a pile of twelve cushions, symbolical of the twelve celestial signs. And this, O nations of *India*, *Japan*, *Siam*, *Thibet* and *China!* this is the theology, which was originally founded by the Egyptians, and has been thence transmitted down and preserved among you in the representations you give of *Brama*, *Beddou*, *Sommanacodom*, and *Omito*. This too, ye Jews and Christians, is the counterpart of an opinion, of which you have retained a certain portion, when you describe *God* as *the breath of life moving upon the face of the waters*, in allusion to the wind,† which, *at*

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c. 20, that the sun is the brain of the universe, and that it is from analogy that the skull of a human being is round, like the planet, the seat of intelligence. Now the word Orph (within) signifies in Hebrew the brain and its seat (cervix): Orpheus, then, is the same as Bedou or Baits; and the Bonzes are those very Orphics which Plutarch represents as quacks, who ate no meat, vended talismans, and little stones, and deceived individuals, and even governments themselves. See a learned memoir of *Freret sur les Orphiques*, *Acad. des Inscript. vol.* 23, *in quarto.*

* See Porphyry in Eusebius, Præp. Evang. lib. 3. p. 115.

† The Northern or Etesian wind, which commences regularly at the solstice, with the inundation.

the origin of the world, that is at the departure of the spheres from the sign of the *Crab*, announced the overflowing of the *Nile*, and seemed to be the forerunner of *creation*."

SECT. VII. *Seventh System. Worship of the* SOUL *of the* WORLD, *that is, of the element of fire, the vital principle of the universe.*

BUT other theological philosophers, revolting at the idea of a being at once both effect and cause, agent and patient, and which united in one and the same nature such contrary natures, distinguished the *moving principle* from the *thing moved;* and assuming as an infallible position or datum, that matter was in itself inert, they pretended that it received its properties by communication from a distinct agent, of which it was only the enveloping tegument or case. Some made this agent the igneous principle, the acknowledged source of all motion: while others again made it the fluid called *æther*, as being thought more active and subtile. Now, as they denominated the vital and motive principle in animals, a soul, a spirit; and, as they always reasoned by analogy, and more particularly by the analogy of the *human species*, they gave to the motive principle of the whole universe the name of *soul, intelligence, spirit; and hence God became the vital spirit diffused through all beings, which animated the vast mundane body.* This idea was represented sometimes by *You-piter, essence of motion and animation, principle of existence*, or rather *existence* itself;* at oth-

* This is the true pronunciation of the Jupiter of the Latins. . . . *Existence itself.* This is the signification of the word *You.*

er times by *Vulcan*, or *Phtha*, elementary principle of fire, or by the altar of *Vesta*, placed in the centre of her temple, like the sun amid the spheres; and again by *Kneph*, a human being dressed in deep blue, holding in his hands a sceptre and a girdle (the Zodiac,) wearing on his head a plume of feathers to express the fugacity of thought, and bringing forth from his mouth the *great egg*.*

"Now, as a consequence resulting from this system, every being containing in itself a portion of the *igneous* or *æthereal* fluid, the universal and common mover, and that fluid *soul of the world* being the *Divinity*, it followed that the souls of all beings were a portion of *God himself*, partaking of all his attributes, that is, being an invisible, simple, and immortal substance; and hence originated the whole system of the *immortality* of the soul, which at first was *eternity*.† Hence also

* A symbol intended to testify him as the author of the world, as well as the producer of animated beings.

† In the system of the first spiritualists, the soul was not created with, or at the same time as the body, in order to be inserted in it: its existence was supposed to be anterior and from all eternity. Such, in a few words, is the doctrine of Macrobius on this head. *Som. Scip. passim.*

"There exists a luminous, igenous, subtle fluid, which under the name of ether and spiritus, fills the universe. It is the essential principle and agent of motion and life, it is the Deity. When an earthly body is to be animated, a small round particle of this fluid gravitates through the milky way towards the lunar sphere, where, when it arrives, it unites with a grosser air, and becomes fit to associate with matter: it then enters and entirely fills the body, animates it, suffers, grows, increases, and diminishes with it; lastly, when the body dies, and its gross elements dissolve, this incorruptible particle takes its leave of it, and returns to the grand ocean of ether, if not retained by its union with the lunar air: it is this air or gas, which, retaining the shape of the body, becomes a phantom or ghost, the perfect representation of the deceased. The Greeks called this phantom the image or idol of the soul; the Pythagoreans, its chariot, its frame; and the Rabbinical school, its vessel, or boat. When a man had conducted himself well in this world, his whole soul, that is its chariot and ether, ascended to the moon, where a separation took place: the chariot lived in the lunar Elysium, and the ether returned to the fixed sphere, that is, to God: for the fixed heaven, says Macrobius, was by many called by the name of God, (c. 14.) If a man had not lived virtuously, the soul remained on earth to undergo purification,

its *transmigrations* known by the name of *metempsychosis*, that is, the transition of the *vital principle* from one body to another, an idea derived from the real transmigration of the material elements.—Such, Ye Hindoos, Budsoists, Christians, Mussulmen, such is the origin of all your ideas of the spirituality of the soul: such the source of the dreams and reveries of *Pythagoras* and of *Plato*, your institutors, who were themselves no more than the mere echos of the concluding sect of visionary philosophers, which we have to give an account of."

SECT. VIII. *Eighth system.* THE WORLD A MACHINE: *worship of the Demi-ourgos, Maker, or supreme Artificer.*

"HITHERTO the theologians, through the whole course of their pursuits and disquisitions on the fine

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and was to wander to and fro, like the wild ghosts of Homer, to whom this doctrine must have been known, since he wrote after the time of Pherecydes and Pythagoras, who were its promulgators in Greece. Herodotus upon this occasion says, that the whole romance of the soul and its transmigration was invented by the Egyptians, and propogated in Greece by men, who pretended to be its authors. I know their names, adds he, but shall not mention them, (*lib.* 2.) Cicero, however, has positively informed us, that it was Pherecydes, master of Pythagoras." *Tuscul. lib.* 1. *sect.* 16. Now admitting that this system was at that period a novelty, it accounts for Solomon's treating it as a fable, who lived 130 years before Pherecydes. "Who knoweth," said he, "the spirit of a man that it goeth upwards? I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts: even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea they have all one breath, so that man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity." Eccl. c. III. v. 18.

And such had been the opinion of Moses, as a translator of Herodotus (M. Archer of the Academy of Inscriptions) justly observes in note 389 of the second book; where he says also that the immortality of the soul was not introduced among the Hebrews till their intercourse with the Assyrians. In other respects, the whole Pythagorean system, properly analysed, appears to be merely a system of physics badly understood.

and subtile substances of æther and the igneous principle, had however uniformly confined their views to objects which palpably fall under the perceptive cognizance and jurisdiction of the senses, and their theology still continued to be the theory of physical powers, placed sometimes exclusively in the stars, and sometimes disseminated through the whole of the universe. But, at this period, some superficial minds, losing sight of the clue and concatenation of ideas which had led to these profound inquiries, or ignorant of the facts on which they were founded, deranged and blasted the valuable results already obtained from them by the introduction of a novel and strange chimera. They pretended that the universe, the heavens, the stars, the sun, differed in no respect from an ordinary machine; and, applying to this hypothesis a comparative analogy borrowed from the works of art, they constructed a fanciful system erected upon the most whimsical and extravagant sophisms. "A machine," said they, "cannot form itself; there must antecedently exist an artificer or workman to construct it; its very existence implies this. Now, the *world* is a *machine;* consequently it must have a *maker*."*

"Hence originated the *Demi-ourgos*, or *supreme artificer*, constituted independent, autocratic, and sovereign Divinity. In vain did the ancient philosophy urge in objection to this hypothesis, that the artificer himself was precisely in the same predicament with the machine in question by standing in equal need of parents and an author, and that it was merely adding an

* All the arguments of the spiritualists are founded on this. See *Macrobius*, at the end of the second book, and *Plato*, with the comments of *Marcilius Ficinus*.

imaginary step to the ladder in order to carry the attribute of eternity a remove higher in their taking it away from the World and conferring it upon Him. But these innovators, not contented with this first paradox, proceeded to the fabrication of a second, and applying to their *artificer* the theory of the human *understanding*, pretended that the *Demi-ourgos*, fashioned his machine after a model or idea pre-existing in his own mind. And, as their masters, the natural philosophers, had placed the *primum mobile* or *sovereign power of motion* in the sphere of the fixed stars under the appellation of intelligence and of reason, so the *spiritualists*, who *aped* them, availing themselves of the same principle made it an attribute of the *Demi-ourgos*, representing this *being* as a distinct, self-existent substance, to which they gave the name of *Mens*, *Logos*, *(reason or speech.)* But, as they moreover held the existence of a *solar principle* or *soul of the world* independently of this they were obliged to make three ranks or gradations of divine personages; first, the *Demi-ourgos* or *God the artificer;* secondly, the *Logos, (reason or speech;)* and thirdly, the *spirit* or *soul* (of the world.)* And this, O ye Christians, is the romantic foundation, on which your doctrine of the *Trinity* is built; this is the system which was born a *Heretic* in the Egyptian temples, was transmitted a *Heathen* to the schools of Greece and Italy, and is now become *Catholic and Orthodox* by the conversion of its partizans, the disciples of *Pythagoras* and *Plato*, to Christianity.

"Thus the Deity, after having been considered, in

* These are the real types of the Christian Trinity.

the early stage of its infancy or nativity, as *the sensible and multiform action of meteors and the elements*:—then as *the combined power of the stars, considered in their respective relations to terrestrial objects*:—then as *those terrestrial objects themselves* in consequence of confounding symbols with the things they represented:—then as the *twofold power of Nature manifested in her two principal operations of production and destruction*:—then as *the animated world* without distinction of agent and patient, of cause and effect:—then as *the solar principle* or *element of fire* acknowledged as *the sole cause of motion*—the Deity, I say, considered under all these different points of view, became in the end a *chimerical and abstract being*, a mere *scholastic subtility*—a *substance without form, a body without figure*,—a raving dream engendered by a delirious distemper of the mind, which it baffles and must forever baffle all the powers of the human understanding to comprehend. But in vain does it seek, in this last stage of its transformation, to screen itself from the senses: for, the seal of its origin is indelibly stamped upon it, and the whole of its attributes, borrowed either from the physical attributes of the universe, such as those of *immensity, eternity, indivisibility, incomprehensibility*, or from the moral qualities of man, such as *goodness, justice, majesty*, and the like: nay, its very names,* being all derived from the phy-

* In our last analysis we found all the names of the Deity to be derived from some material object in which it was supposed to reside. We have given a considerable number of instances; let us add one more relative to our word *God*. This is known to be the *Deus* of the Latins, and the *Theos* of the Greeks. Now by the confession of Plato (*in Cratylo*) of Macrobius (*Saturn lib.* 1. *c.* 24,) and of Plutarch (*Isis and Osiris*,) its root is *thein*, which signifies to wander like *planien*, that is to say, it is synonymous with

sical beings which have served as its types, particularly the sun, the planets, and the world, continually present to us, in spite of those who have laboured to corrupt and disguise it, the most perfect and undisfigured traces of its genuine nature and extraction.

"Such is the train of ideas which the human mind had already traced out at a period anterior to the positive recitals of history; and, since their systematic form and connection prove them to have been the result of one continued series of study and research, every thing inclines us to place the theatre of investigation, where their primitive elements locally originated, in *Egypt*. There their progress was rapid, because the leisure and vacant curiosity of the theological phi-

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planets; because, add our authors, both the ancient Greeks and barbarians particularly worshipped the planets. I know that such enquiries into etymologies have been much decried: but if, as is the case, words are the representative signs of ideas, the genealogy of the one becomes that of the other, and a good etymological dictionary would be the most perfect history of the human understanding. It would only be necessary in this inquiry to observe certain precautions, which have hitherto been neglected, and particularly to make an exact comparison of the value of the letters of the different alphabets. But, to continue our subject, we shall add that in the Phenician language, the word *thab* (with *ain*) signifies also to wander, and appears to be the derivation of *thein*. If we suppose *Deus* to be derived from the Greek *Zeus*, a proper name of *You-piter*, having *zaw*, I live, for its root, its sense will be precisely that of *you*, and will mean *soul* of the world, *igneous* principle. See note (84.) *Div-us*, which only signifies Genius, God of the second order, appears to me to come from the oriental word *div*, substituted for *dib*, wolf and chacal, one of the emblems of the sun. At Thebes, says Macrobius, the sun was painted under the form of a wolf or chacal, for there are no wolves in Egypt. The reason of this emblem, doubtless, is that the chacal, like the cock, announces by its cries the sun's rising; and this reason is confirmed by the analogy of the words *lykos*, wolf, and *lyke*, light of the morning, whence comes *lux*.

Dius, which is to be understood also of the sun, must be derived from *dib*, a hawk. "The Egyptians," says Porphyry (*Euseb. Præcep. Evang.* p. 92,) "represent the sun under the emblem of a hawk, because this bird soars to the highest regions of the air where light abounds." And in reality we continually see at Cairo large flights of these birds hovering in the air, from whence they descend not but to stun us with their shrieks, which are like the monosyllable *dib*: and here, as in the preceding example, we find an analogy between the word *dies*, day, light, and *Dius*, God, Sun.

losophers had, in the retirement of the temples, no other food than the enigma of the universe, which was never absent from their minds; and because, in the political dissentions which long distracted that country, each state had its college of priests, who being successively auxiliaries or rivals, accelerated by their disputes the progress of science and discovery.*

* One of the proofs that all these systems were invented in Egypt is, that this is the only country where we see a complete body of doctrine formed from the remotest antiquity.

Clemens Alexandrinus has transmitted to us (*Stromat. lib.* 6.) a curious detail of the 42 volumes which were borne in the procession of Isis. "The priest," says he, "or chanter, carries one of the symbolic instruments of music, and two of the books of Mercury; one containing hymns of the Gods, the other the list of the kings. Next to him the *horoscope* (the regulator of time,) carries a palm and a dial, symbols of astrology; he must know by heart the four books of Mercury which treat of astrology; the first on the order of the planets, the second on the risings of the sun and moon, and the two last on the rising and aspect of the stars. Then comes the sacred author, with feathers on his head (like *kneph*) and a book in his hand, together with ink, and a reed to write with (as is still the practice among the Arabs). He must be versed in hieroglyphics, must understand the description of the universe, the course of the sun, moon, stars, and planets, be acquainted with the division of Egypt into 36 *nomes*, with the course of the Nile, with instruments, measures, sacred ornaments, and sacred places. Next comes the stole bearer, who carries the cubit of the justice, or measure of the Nile, and a cup for the libations; he bears also in the procession ten volumes on the subject of sacrifices, hymns, prayers, offerings, ceremonies, festivals. Lastly arrives the prophet, bearing in his bosom a pitcher, so as to be exposed to view; he is followed by persons carrying bread (as at the marriage of Cana). This prophet, as president of the mysteries, learns ten other sacred volumes, which treat of the laws, the Gods, and the discipline of the priests. Now there are in all forty-two volumes, thirty-six of which are studied and got by heart by these personages, and the remaining six are set apart to be consulted by the *pastophores:* they treat of medicine, the construction of the human body (anatomy,) diseases, remedies, instruments, &c. &c."

We leave the reader to deduce all the consequences of an Encyclopedia. It is ascribed to Mercury; but Jamblicus tells us that each book, composed by priests was dedicated to that God, who, on account of his title of Genius or *decan* opening the zodiac, presided over every enterprise. He is the *Janus* of the Romans, and the *Guianeva* of the Indians, and it is remarkable that *Janus* and *Guianes* are homonymous. In short, it appears that these books are the source of all that has been transmitted to us by the Greeks and Latins in every science, even in alchymy, necromancy, &c. What is most to be regretted in their loss is that part which related to the principles of medicine and diet, in which the Egyptians appear to have made a considerable progress, and to have delivered many useful observations.

"Now, there happened at that distant period on the borders of the Nile, what has since been repeated all over the globe. According as each system was formed, it excited by its novelty quarrels and schisms; then, gaining credit even by the persecution levelled against it, it either destroyed anterior ideas, or incorporated itself with and modified them. And as political institutions supervened, all opinions, by the successive aggregation of states and the commixture of people of different nations became at length confounded. The concatenation and connection of ideas in consequence of this perished and sunk into oblivion, and theology, thereby degenerating into a perfect chaos, became a mere logogryph of old traditions no longer understood: so that Religion, having thus lost sight of its object, was now no more than a simple political expedient employed to lead and keep the credulous vulgar in awe, which was resorted to either by men credulous themselves and the dupes of their own visionary imaginations, or by bold and aspiring geniuses, who formed vast projects of ambition."

Sect. IX. *Religion of Moses, or worship of the soul of the world (You-piter.)*

"Of this latter description was the Hebrew legislator, who, desirous of separating his nation from every other, and of forming a distinct and exclusive empire, conceived the design of founding it upon religious prejudices, and of erecting around it a sacred rampart of rites and opinions. But in vain did he proscribe the worship of symbols, the reigning religion at that time

in Lower Egypt and Phenicia :* his God was not on that account the less an *Egyptian* God, of the invention of those priests whose disciple Moses had been; and *Yahouh*,† detected by his very name, which means

* "At a certain period," says Plutarch (de Iside), "all the Egyptians have their animal Gods painted. The Thebans are the only people who do not employ painters, because they worship a God whose form comes not under the senses, and cannot be represented." And this is the God whom Moses educated at Heliopolis, adopted; but the idea was not of his own invention.

† Such is the true pronunciation of the Jehovah of the moderns, who violate, in this respect, every rule of criticism; since it is evident that the ancients, particularly the Eastern Syrians and Phenicians, were acquainted neither with the *Je* nor the *V*, which are of Tartar origin. The subsisting usage of the Arabs, which we have re-established here, is confirmed by Diodorus, who calls the God of Moses *Iaw*, (*lib.* 1), and *Iaw* and *Iahouh* are manifestly the same word: the identity continues in that of *Iou-piter*; but in order to render it more complete, we shall demonstrate the signification to be the same.

In Hebrew, that is to say, in one of the dialects of the common language of Lower Asia, *Yahouh* is the particle of the verb *hiv*, to exist, to be, and signifies existing; in other words, the principal of life, the mover or even motion (the universal soul of beings). Now what is Jupiter? Let us hear the Greeks and Latins explain their theology. "The Egyptians," says Diodorus, after Manatho, priest of Memphis, "in giving names to the five elements, called *spirit*, or ether, *You-piter*, on account of the true meaning of that word: for *spirit* is the source of life, author of the vital principle in animals; and for this reason they considered him as the father, the generator of beings." For the same reason Homer says, father, and king of men and Gods. (*Died. lib.* 1. *sect.* 1.)

"Theologians," says Macrobius, "consider *You-piter* as the soul of the world." Hence the words of Virgil: "Muses let us begin with You-piter; the world is full of You-piter." (*Somn. Scip.* c. 17.) And in the Saturnalia, he says, "Jupiter is the Sun himself." It was this also which made Virgil say, "The spirit nourishes the life (of beings,) and the soul diffused through the vast members (of the universe,) agitates the whole mass, and forms but one immense body."

"Ioupiter," says the ancient verses of the Orphic sect, which originated in Egypt; verses collected by Onomacritus in the days of Pisistratus, "Ioupiter, represented with the thunder in his hand, is the beginning, origin, end, and middle of all things: a single and universal power, he governs every thing; heaven, earth, fire, water, the elements, day, and night. These are what constitute his immense body; his eyes are the sun and moon: he is space and eternity: in fine," adds Porphyry, "Jupiter, is the world, the universe, that which constitutes the essence and life of all beings.—Now," continues the same author, "as philosophers differ in opinion respecting the nature and constituent parts of this God, and as they could invent no figure that should represent all his attributes, they painted him in the form of a man. He is in a sitting posture, in allusion to his immutable essence; the upper part of his body is uncovered, because it is in the upper regions of the universe (the stars) that he most conspicuously displays himself. He is

essence (of beings), and by his *symbol*, the *fiery bush*, is nothing more than the *soul of the world*, the *principle of motion*, the same which Greece shortly after adopted under the same denomination in her *You-piter*, *generative being*, and under that of *Ei*, *existence*;* the same which the Thebans consecrated under the name of *Kneph*; which *Sais* worshipped under the emblem of *Isis veiled*, with this inscription, *I am all that has*

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covered from the waist downwards, because respecting terrestrial things he is more secret and concealed. He holds a sceptre in his left hand, because on his left side is the heart, and the heart is the seat of the understanding, which (in human beings) regulates every action." *Euseb. Præper. Evang. p.* 100.

The following passage of the geographer and philosopher, Strabo, removes every doubt as to the identity of the ideas of Moses and those of the heathen theologians.

"Moses, who was one of the Egyptian priests, taught his followers that it was an egregious error to represent the Deity under the form of animals, as the Egyptians did, or in the shape of a man, as was the practice of the Greeks and Africans. That alone is the Deity, said he, which constitutes heaven, earth, and every living thing; that which we call the *world*, the *sum of all things*, *nature*; and no reasonable person will think of representing such a being by the image of any one of the objects around us. It is for this reason, that, rejecting every species of images or idols, Moses wished the Deity to be worshipped without emblems, and according to his proper nature; and he accordingly ordered a temple worthy of him to be erected, *&c. Geograph. lib.* 16, *p.* 1104, edition of 1707.

The theology of Moses has, then, differed in no respect from that of his followers, that is to say, from that of the Stoics and Epicureans, who consider the Deity as the soul of the world. This philosophy appears to have taken birth, or to have been disseminated when Abraham came into Egypt (200 years before Moses) since he quitted his system of idols for that of the God *Yahouh*; so that we may place its promulgation about the seventeenth or eighteenth century before Christ; which corresponds with what we have said before.

As to the history of Moses, Diodorus properly represents it when he says, *lib.* 34 and 40, "That the Jews were driven out of Egypt at a time of dearth, when the country was full of foreigners, and that Moses, a man of extraordinary prudence and courage, seized this opportunity of establishing his religion in the mountains of Judea." It will seem paradoxical to assert, that the 600,000 armed men whom he conducted thither ought to be reduced to 6,000: but I can confirm the assertion by so many proofs drawn from the books themselves, that it will be necessary to correct an error which appears to have arisen from the mistake of the transcribers.

* This was the monosyllable written on the gate of the temple of Delphos. Plutarch has made it the subject of dissertation.

been, all that is, and all that will be, and no mortal being has ever drawn aside my veil ; which Pythagoras honoured under the appellation of *Vesta*, and which the Stoic philosophy correctly defined by calling it the principle of *fire*. In vain did Moses wish to obliterate and exclude from his religion whatever might tend to revive or bring to remembrance the worship of the stars ; a multiplicity of vestiges, in spite of all his exertions, still remained to identify its presence ; the seven *lamps* or *planets* of the great candlestick, the *twelve stones* or *signs* of the *Urim* of the high-priest, the feast of the two *equinoxes*, each of which in those times formed a year, the ceremony of the lamb or celestial ram, then at its fifteenth degree ; and lastly, the name even of *Osiris* preserved in his song,* and the *ark* or coffer, in imitation of the tomb in which that God was inclosed ; all which remain to bear record of the genealogical extraction of his ideas, and of their derivation from the comnon source."

Sect. X. *Religion of Zoroaster.*

" Zoroaster was also a man of the same bold and enterprising genius, who, five ages after Moses, and in the time of David, revived and moralized among the *Medes* and *Bactrians* the whole Egyptian system of *Osiris* and *Typhon*, under the names of *Ormuzd* and *Ahrimanes* who called *Virtue* and *Good* the reign of summer, *Sin* and *Evil* the reign of winter, *Creation of*

* These are the little expressions of the book of Deuteronomy, chap. 32, "The works of *Tsour* are perfect." Now *Tsour* has been translated by the word creator ; its proper signification is to give *forms*, and this is one of the definitions of Osiris in Plutarch.

the world the renovation of nature in the spring, *resurrection* that of the spheres in the secular periods of their conjunctions, *future life*, *hell* and *paradise*, what were the *Tartarus* and *Elysium* of the ancient *astrologers* and *geographers*; in a word, who only consecrated the already existing reveries of the mystic system."

Sect. XI. *Budsoism, or the religion of the Samaneans.*

"Of the same enterprising class likewise were the promulgators of the sepulchral *doctrine* of the *Samaneans*, who founded on the *metampsychosis* the misanthropic system of *renunciation* and *denial, of self*; who, laying it down as a principle, that the *body* is only a *prison* where the *soul* lives in *impure* confinement; that life is but a *dream*, an *illusion*, and the *world* merely a thoroughfare to another *country*, to a *life without end*, placed *virtue* and *perfection* in *absolute torpor*, in the *extinction of all sensibility*, in the *abnegation* of the physical organs, in the *annihilation* of the whole *being*; whence resulted the *fasts*, *penance*, *mortifications*, *solitude*, *contemplations*, and all the mad and deplorable practices of the wild-brained *Anchorets*.

Sect. XII. *Brachmanism, or the Indian system.*

"Of the same description too were the founders of the Indian system, who, refining after Zoroaster upon the two principles of *production* and *destruction*, introduced an *intermediate* one, that of *preservation*, and

upon their *trinity in unity* of *Brama, Chiven*, and *Bichenou*, heaped together a mass of traditional allegories, in conjunction with the finespun subtleties of their metaphysics.

"Such are the materials, which pervaded Asia, and have existed there for a long series of ages, when a fortuitous train of circumstances and events gave rise to new modifications of them on the banks of the Euphrates and on the shores of the Mediterranean."

SECT. XIII. *Christianity, or the allegorical worship of the Sun under the cabalistical names of* CHRISEN *or* CHRIST, *and* YES-US *or* JESUS.

"IN the establishment of a separate people, in vain did Moses imagine that he should guard them from the influence or every foreign notion: an invincible bias, founded on an affinity of origin, continually called back the Hebrews to the worship of the neighbouring nations; and the commercial and political relations that necessarily subsisted between them, tended every day to strengthen this congenial and growing propensity. So long as the Mosaic institution maintained its ground, the coercion of government and of the laws was a considerable bar to innovation, and effectually retarded its progress; yet even then the *high places were filled with idols*, and *God the Sun had his chariot* and horses painted in the palaces of kings, and in the very temple of *Yahouh*; but, when the conquests of the Sultans of *Nineveh* and of *Babylon* had dissolved the ties of public authority, the people, left to their own discretion, and encouraged by their conquerors, no

longer opposed the bent of their inclination, but openly professed profane opinions, which became currently received in Judea. At first the Assyrian colonies, settled in place of the tribes, filled the kingdom of Samaria, with the dogmas of the Magi, which soon found their way into the kingdom of Judah. Afterwards, when Jerusalem was subjugated, the *Egyptians*, *Syrians*, and *Arabs*, flocking from all parts into this open country, introduced their tenets, and the religion of Moses thus underwent a double alteration. Again, the priests and great men, removed to Babylon, and educated in the sciences of the Chaldeans, imbibed, during a residence of seventy years, the whole of their theology, and from that moment the dogmas of the *inimical* Genius (Satan,) of the *Aarchangel Michael*,* of the *Ancient of Days* (Ormuzd,) *of the rebellious angels, of the celestial conflicts, of the immortality of the soul,* and *of the ressurrection, (dogmas unknown to Moses or rejected by him* since he observes a perfect silence respecting them,) became naturalized among the Jews.

"On their return to their own country, the emigrants brought back with them these foreign notions: and the introduction of these innovations in opinion occasioned from the beginning disputes between their partisans the *Pharisees*, and their opponents the *Sadducees*, the great champions in behalf of the ancient national religion; but the former, seconded by the predisposition of the people, and the habits they had already contract-

* "The names of the angels and of the months, such as Gabriel, Michael, Yar, Nisan, &c. came from Babylon with the Jews;" says expressly the Talmud of Jerusalem. See *Beausob. Hist. du Manich.* Vol. II. p. 624, where he proves that the saints of the Almanac are an imitation of the 365 angels of the Persians; and Jamblicus in his Egyptian Mysteries, sect. 2, c. 3, speaks of angels, archangels, seraphim, &c. like a true Christian.

ed, and supported by the authority of the *Persians*, their deliverers, finally gained the ascendency over the latter, and thus the theology of Zoroaster became consecrated by the children of Moses.*

"A fortuitous analogy between two leading ideas proved particularly favourable to this coalition, and formed the basis of the last system of all, the fortune of which was no less surprising than the causes of its formation.

"From the time that the Assyrians had destroyed the kingdom of *Samaria*, some persons of sagacity and discernment, foreseeing that *Jerusalem* was doomed to undergo the same fate, were perpetually foreboding and predicting it: and their predictions were all stamped with this particularity, that they always concluded with prayers for a happy re-establishment and *regeneration*, announced in the form of *prophecies*. The enthusiasm of the Hierophants had pictured to itself *a royal deliverer, who was to re-establish the nation in its ancient glory: the Hebrews were again to become a powerful and conquering people, and Jerusalem the capital of an empire that was to extend over the whole world.*

"From events having realised the first part of those predictions, the *ruin of Jerusalem*, the minds of the people clung to the second with a tenacious firmness of belief proportioned to their misfortunes; and the afflicted Jews waited with the impatience of want and de-

* "The whole philosophy of the gymnosophists," says Diogenes Laertius on the authority of an ancient writer, "is derived from that of the Magi, and many assert that of the Jews to have the same origin." *Lib.* 1. c. 9. Megasthenes, an historian of repute in the days of Seleucus Nicanor, and who wrote particularly upon India, speaking of the philosophy of the ancients respecting natural things, puts the Brachmans and the Jews precisely on the same footing.

sire, for *the victorious king and deliverer* that was to come to save the nation of *Moses*, and to restore the throne of *David*.

" The sacred and mythological traditions of preceding times had spread all over Asia a tenet perfectly congenial with the foregoing. A *grand mediator*, a *final judge*, a future saviour, was every where currently spoken of, who, in the character of *King*, *God*, *Conqueror*, and *Legislator*, was to restore the *golden age* upon earth, to deliver the world from the reign of *evil*, and to re-establish among mankind the *reign of good*, *peace* and *happiness*. These notions interested and operated upon the minds of the people, the more from their affording them consolation, under that deplorable state of real suffering and calamity into which they had been plunged, by the successive devastations of conquests and conquerors, and the barbarous despotism of the governments.—This resemblance between the oracles of different nations, and the predictions of the prophets, excited the attention of the Jews ; and the *prophets* had no doubt had the address to model and colour their representations, after the spirit and style of the sacred books employed in the *Pagan mysteries*. The arrival of a great minister, of a final saviour, was therefore the general expectation in Judea, when at length a singular circumstance served to determine the precise period of his coming.

" It was recorded in the *sacred books* of the Persians and the Chaldeans that the *world*, composed of a cycle of *twelve thousand*, was divided into two partial *revolutions*, of which one, the *age* and *reign* of *good*, was to *terminate* at the expiration of *six thousand*, and

the other, the *age* and *reign* of *evil*, at the expiration *of another six thousand.*

"The original authors of these recitals thereby denoted the annual revolution of the *great celestial orb* called the *World*; (a *revolution* composed of *twelve months* or *signs*, each divided into a *thousand parts*,) and the two systematic periods of *winter* and *summer*, each alike consisting of *six thousand*. But all these equivocal expressions having been erroneously explained, and taken in an *absolute* and *moral*, instead of their *astrological* and *physical* acceptation, the result was, that the annual was taken for a secular world, the *thousands* of time for *thousands* of years; and presuming, from the appearance of things, that that in which they lived was the *age of misfortune*, they concluded that it was to terminate at the expiration of the *six thousand* pretended *years*.*

* We have already seen, note 29, this tradition current among the Tuscans; it was disseminated through most nations, and shows us what we ought to think of all the pretended creations and terminations of the world, which are merely the beginnings and endings of astronomical periods invented by astrologers. That of the year or solar revolution, being the most simple and perceptible, served as a model to the rest, and its comparison gave rise to the most whimsical ideas. Of this description is the idea of the four ages of the world among the Indians. Originally these four ages were merely the four seasons; and as each season was under the supposed influence of a planet; it bore the name of the metal appropriated to that planet: thus, spring was the age of the sun, or of gold; summer the age of the moon, or of silver; autumn the age of Venus, or of brass; and winter the age of Mars, or of iron. Afterwards when astronomers invented the great year of 25 and 36 thousand common years, which had for its object the bringing back all the stars to one point of departure and a general conjunction, the ambiguity of the terms introduced a familiar ambiguity of ideas; and the myriads of the celestial signs and periods of duration which were thus measured, were easily converted into so many revolutions of the sun. Thus the different periods of creation which have been so great a source of difficulty and misapprehension to curious inquirers, were in reality nothing more than hypothetical calculations of astronomical periods. In the same manner the creation of the world has been attributed to different seasons of the year, just as these different seasons have served for the fictious period of these conjunctions; and of consequence has been adopted by different nations for the commencement of an ordinary year. Among the Egyptians

"Now, according to the Jewish computation, six thousand years had already nearly elapsed since the (supposed) creation of *the World*.* This coincidence was the source of considerable agitation of mind.—The thoughts of the people were bent upon nothing but an *approaching end*. The *Hierophants* were interrogated, and their mystical books examined, but were found to disagree as to the precise term of its accomplishment. The great *Mediator* and *final Judge* was ex-

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this period fell upon the summer solstice, which was the commencement of their year; and the departure of the spheres according to their conjectures, fell in like manner upon the period when the sun enters Cancer. Among the Persians the year commenced at first in the spring, or when the sun enters Aries; and from thence the first Christians were led to suppose that God created the world in the spring: this opinion is also favoured by the book of Genesis; and it is farther remarkable, that the world is not there said to be created by the God of Moses (*Yahouh*), but by the *Elohim* or gods in the plural, that is, by the *angels* or *genii*, for so the word constantly means in the Hebrew books. If we farther observe that the root of the word *Elohim* signifies strong or powerful, and that the Egyptians called their *decans* strong and powerful leaders; attributing to them the creation of the world, we shall presently perceive that the book of Genesis affirms neither more nor less than that the world was created by the *decans*, by those very *genii* whom, according to Sanchoniathon, Mercury excited against Saturn, and who were called *Elohim*. It may be farther asked why the plural substantive *Elohim* is made to agree with the singular verb *bara* (the Elohim creates.) The reason is, that after the Babylonish captivity the unity of the Supreme Being was the prevailing opinion of the Jews; it was therefore thought proper to introduce a pious solecism in language, which it is evident had no existence before Moses; thus in the names of the children of Jacob many of them are compounded of a plural verb, to which Elohim is the nominative case understood, as *Raouben* (Reuben), *they have looked upon me* and *Samaonni* (Simeon), *they have granted me my prayer*, to wit; the Elohim. The reason of this etymology is to be found in the religious creeds of the wives of Jacob, whose gods were the *taraphim* of Laban, that is, the angels of the Persians and the Egyptian decans.

* According to the computation of the Seventy, the period elapsed consisted of about 5,600 years, and this computation was principally followed. It is well known how much, in the first ages of the church, this opinion of the end of the world agitated the minds of men. In the sequel, the general councils, encouraged by finding that the general conflagration did not come, pronounced the expectation that prevailed heretical, and its believers were called Millenarians; a circumstance curious enough, since it is evident from the history of the gospels that Jesus Christ was a Millenarian, and of consequence a heretic.

pected, and his advent anxiously coveted, in order that he might put a period to so many calamities. This *personage* was so much the subject of conversation, that some one was said to have seen him, and a rumour of this kind was all that was wanting to establish a general certainty. Hence popular report was converted into an attested fact; the *imaginary being* became realised; and all the circumstances of mythological tradition being compiled and linked with this phantom assumed the form of an authentic and regular history, which from henceforth it was nothing short of blasphemy to doubt.

"In this mythological history the following traditions were recorded :—"That, *in the beginning, a man and a woman had, by their* fall, *brought sin and evil into the world.*"

"By this was denoted the astronomical fact of the *celestial Virgin,* and the *herdsman,* (Bootes) which, setting heliacally at the autumnal equinox, resigned the heavens to the wintry constellations, and seemed, in sinking below the horizon, to introduce into the world the genius of evil, *Ahrimanes,* represented by the constellation of the *Serpent.**

"That *the woman had drawn and seduced away the man.*"†

* "The Persians," says Chardin, "call the constellation of the serpent *Ophiucus,* serpent of Eve: and this serpent *Ophiucus* or *Ophioneus,* plays a similar part in the theology of the Phenicians," for Pherecydes, their disciple and the master of Pythagoras, said "that *Ophioneus serpentinus* had been chief of the rebels against Jupiter." See Marf. Ficin. Apol. Socrat. p. m. 797. col. 2. I shall add that *ephah* (with ain) signifies in Hebrew serpent.

† In a physical sense to seduce, *seducere,* means only to attract, to draw after us.

"And indeed the Virgin which sets the first, actually appears to draw the Herdsman (Bootes) after her.

"That *the woman had tempted him by offering him fruit pleasant to the sight and good for food, which gave the knowledge of good and evil.*"

"Now, the *Virgin* is accordingly depicted holding a *bunch of fruit* in her hand, which she appears to extend towards the *Herdsman*: in like manner, the branch, the emblem of autumn, placed in the picture of *Mithra** on the confines of winter and summer, seems to open the door, and to give the *knowledge*, the *key*, of good and evil.

"That *this couple had been driven from the celestial garden, and that a cherub with a flaming sword had been placed at the door to guard it.*"

"And when the *Virgin* and the *Herdsman* sink below the Western horizon, *Perseus* rises on the opposide,† which genius appears to drive them, sword in hand, from the summer heaven, the *garden* and *reign* of *fruits* and *flowers*.

"That *from this virgin would be born, would spring up a shoot, a child, that should crush the serpent's head, and deliver the world from sin.*"

"By this was denoted the Sun, which, at the period

* See this picture in Hyde, page 111, edition of 1760.

† Rather the head of Medusa; that head of a woman once so beautiful, which Perseus cut off, and which he holds in his hand, is only that of the virgin, whose head sinks below the horizon at the very moment that Perseus rises; and the serpents which surround it are Orphiucus and the Polar Dragon, who then occupy the zenith. This shews us in what manner the ancients composed all their figures and fables. They took such constellations as they found at the same time on the circle of the horizon, and collecting the different parts, they formed groupes which served them as an almanac in hieroglyphic characters. Such is the secret of all their pictures, and the solution of all their mythological monsters. The virgin is also Andromeda, delivered by Perseus from the whale that *pursues* her (*pro-sequitor*.)

of the winter solstice, at the precise moment that the *Persian Magi drew the horoscope of the new year, was found in the bosom of the Virgin, in its heliacal rising on the eastern horizon;* and which was accordingly represented in their astrological pictures under the form of an infant suckled by a *chaste virgin,** and afterwards became, at the vernal equinox, the *Ram* or *Lamb, conqueror* of the constellation of the *Serpent*, which disappeared from the heavens.

"That *in his infancy, this restorer of the divine or celestial nature, would lead an abased, humble, obscure, and indigent life.*"

"By which was meant that the winter *sun* was abased or sunk beneath the horizon, and that this first pe-

* Such was the picture of the Persian sphere, cited by Aben Ezra, in the *Calum Poeticum* of Blaeu, p. 71. "The picture of the first decan of the Virgin," says that writer, "represents a beautiful virgin with flowing hair, sitting in a chair, with two ears of corn in her hand, and suckling an infant, called Jesus by some nations, and Christ in Greek."

In the library of the late king of France was a manuscript in Arabic, marked 1165, in which is a picture of the twelve signs: and that of the Virgin represents a young woman with an infant by her side: the whole scene, indeed, of the birth of Jesus is to be found in the adjacent part of the heavens. The stable is the constellation of the charioteer and the goat, formerly Capricorn; a constellation called *præsepe Jovis Heniochi. stable of Iou;* and the word *Iou* is found in the name Iou-seph (Joseph.) At no great distance is the ass of Typhon, (the great she bear,) and the ox or bull, the ancient attendants of the manger. Peter the Porter, is Janus with his keys and bald forehead: the twelve apostles are the genii of the twelve months, *&c.* This Virgin has acted very different parts in the various systems of mythology; she has been the Isis of the Egyptians, who said of her in one of their inscriptions cited by Julian, *the fruit I have brought forth is the sun.* The majority of traits drawn by Plutarch apply to her, in the same manner as those of Osiris apply to Bootes; also the seven principal stars of the she bear, called David's chariot, were called the chariot of Osiris, (*see Kirker;*) and the crown that is situated behind, formed of ivy, was called *Chen. Osirie*, the tree of Osiris. The Virgin has likewise been Ceres, whose mysteries were the same with those of Isis and Mithra; she has been the Diana of the Ephesians; the great goddess of Syria, Cyble, drawn by lions; Minerva, the Mother of Bacchus; Astræa, a chaste virgin taken up into heaven at the end of the golden age; Themis, at whose feet is the balance that is put in her hands; the Sybil of Virgil, who descends into hell, or sinks below the hemisphere with a branch in her hand, *&c.*

riod of his four ages, or seasons, was a period of obscurity and scarcity, of fasting and privation.

"That *being put to death by the wicked, he would gloriously rise again, and ascend from hell into heaven, where he would reign forever.*"

"By these expressions was described the life of the same sun, who, from terminating his career at the winter solstice, when *Typhon* and the rebellious angels bore away, seemed to be put to *death* by them; but shortly after *revived* and *rose again** in the firmament of heaven, where he still remains.

"These traditions went still farther specifying his *astrological* and *mysterious names*, stating that he was called sometimes, Chris or the Preserver ;† and this ye

* *Resurgere*, to rise a second time, cannot signify to return to life, but in a metaphorical sense; but we see continually mistakes of this kind result from the ambiguous meaning of the words made use of in ancient tradition.

† The Greeks used to express by X, or Spanish iota, the aspirated *ha* of the Orientals, who said *haris*. In Hebrew *heres* signifies the sun, but in Arabic the meaning of the radical word is, to guard, to preserve, and of *haris* guardian, preserver. It is the proper epithet of Vichenou, which demonstrates at once the identity of the Indian and Christian Trinities, and their common origin. It is manifestly but one system, which, divided into two branches, one extending to the east, and the other to the west, assuming two different forms: Its principal trunk is the Pythagorean system of the soul of the world, or *Iou-piter*. The epithet *piter*, or father having been applied to the demi-ourgos of Plato, gave rise to an ambiguity which caused an enquiry to be made respecting the son of this father. In the opinion of the philosophers the sun was understanding, *Nous* and *Logos*, from which the *Latins* made their *Verbum*. And thus we clearly perceive the origin of the *eternal father* and of the *Verbum* his son, proceeding from him (*Mens Ex Deo nata*, says Macrobius:) the *anima* or *spiritus mundi*, was the Holy-Ghost; and it is for this reason that Manes, Basilides, Valentinius, and other pretended heretics of the first ages, who traced things to their source, said, that God the Father was the supreme inaccessible light (that of the heaven, the *primum mobile* or the *aplanes*;) the Son the secondary light resident in the sun, and the Holy-Ghost the atmosphere of the earth, (See *Beausob.* vol. ii. p. 586 :) hence, among the Syrians, the representation of the Holy Ghost by a dove, the bird of Venus Urania, that is, of the air. The Syrians (says *Nigidius de Germanico,*) assert that a dove sat for a certain number of days on the egg of a fish, and that from this incubation Venus was born: Sextus Empiricus also observes (*Inst. Pyrrh. lib. 3 c. 23,*) that the Syrians abstained from eating doves; which intimates to us a period commencing in the sign *Pisces* in the winter solstice.—We may far-

people of India, this is your God Chris-en or Chris-na; and this too, ye Christians of the Greek and Western Church, is your Chris-tos, the son of *Mary*.—That at other times he was called *Yes*, by the union of three letters, which, according to their numerical import, express the number 608, one of the solar periods.* And here, O Europeans, is the name which, with a Latin termination, has become your *Yesus* or *Jesus*; the ancient and cabalistical name given to *young Bacchus*, the clandestine son of the *virgin Minerva*, who in the whole history of his life, and even in his death, calls to mind the history of the *God of the Christians*; that is the *star of day* of which they are both of them emblems.

At these words a violent murmur arose on the part of the Christian groupes; but the Mahometans, the Lamas, and the Hindoos having called them to order, the orator thus concluded his discourse.

"You are not to be told," said he, "in what manner the rest of this *system* was formed in the chaos and anarchy of the three first centuries; how a multiplicity of opinions divided the people, all of which were embraced with equal zeal and retained with equal obstinacy, because alike founded on ancient *tradition*, they were alike sacred. You know how, at the end of the *three centuries*, government having espoused one of

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ther observe, that if *Chris* comes from *Harisch* by a chin, it will signify *artificer*, an epithet belonging to the sun. These variations, which must have embarrassed the ancients, prove it to be the real type of Jesus, as had been already remarked in the time of Tertullian. "Many," says this writer, "suppose with greater probability that the sun is our God, and they refer us to the religion of the Persians:" *Apologet, c.* 16.

* See a curious ode to the Sun, by Matinus Capella, translated by Gebelin.

these sects, made it the *orthodox religion ;* that is to say, the *predominant religion*, to the exclusion of the rest, which, on account of their inferiority, were denominated heresies ; how, and by what means of violence and seduction this religion was propagated, and gained strength, and afterwards became divided and weakened : how *six centuries* after the innovation of *Christianity*, another system was formed out of its materials and those of the *Jews*, and a political and theological empire was created by *Mahomet* at the expense of that of Moses and the *vicars of Jesus*.

"Now if you take a retrospect of the whole history of the spirit of religion, you will find, that in its origin it had *no other author* than the sensations and wants of man : that the *idea of God* had no other type, no other model, than that of *physical powers*, *material existences*, operating *good* or *evil*, by impressions of pleasure or pain on sensible beings. You will find that in the formation of every system *this spirit of religion* pursued the same tract, and was uniform in its proceedings ; that in all, the *dogma* never failed to represent, *under the name of God*, the operations of nature, and the passions and prejudices of men ; that in all, *morality had for its sole end*, desire of happiness and aversion to pain ; but that the people and the majority of the legislators, ignorant of the true road that led thereto, invented false, and therefore contrary ideas of *virtue* and *vice*, of *good* and *evil ;* that is, of what renders man happy or miserable. You will find, that in all the means and causes propagation and establishment exhibited the same scenes, the same passions, and the same events, continual disputes about words, false pretexts

for inordinate zeal, for revolutions, for wars lighted up by the ambition of chiefs, by the chicanery of promulgators, by the credulity of proselytes, by the ignorance of the vulgar, and by the grasping cupidity and the intollerant pride of all. In short, you will find that the *whole history of the spirit of religion* is merely that of the fallibility and uncertainty of the human mind, which, placed in a world that it does not comprehend, is yet desirous of solving the *enigma*, and which, the *astonishing spectator of this mysterious and visible prodigy, imagines causes, supposes ends, builds systems;* then, *finding one defective, abandons it for another not less vicious; hates the error that it has renounced, is ignorant of the new one that it adopts; rejects the truth of which it is in pursuit, invents chimeras of heterogeneous and contradictory beings, and, ever dreaming of wisdom and happiness, loses itself in a labyrinth of torments and illusions.*"

CHAP. XXIII.

THE END OF ALL RELIGIONS THE SAME.

Thus spake the *orator*, in the name of those who had made the origin and genealogy of religious ideas their peculiar study.

The theologians of different systems now expressed their opinions of this discourse. "It is an impious representation," said some, "which aims at nothing less than the subversion of all belief, the introducing insubordination into the minds of men, and annihilating our

power and ministry."—"It is a romance," said others, "a tissue of conjectures, fabricated with art, but destitute of foundation."—The moderate and prudent said, "Supposing all this to be true, where is the use of revealing these mysteries? Our opinions are doubtless pervaded with errors, but those errors are a necessary curb on the multitude. The world has gone on thus for two thousand years: why should we now alter its course?"

The murmur of disapprobation, which never fails to arise against every kind of innovation, already began to increase, when a numerous groupe of plebeians and untaught men of every country and nation, without prophets, without doctors, without religious worship, advancing in the sand, attracted the attention of the whole assembly; and one of them, addressed himself to the legislators, spoke as follows.

"Mediators and umpires of nations! The strange recitals that have been made during the whole of the present debate, we never, till this day, heard of; and our understanding, astonished and bewildered at such a multitude of doctrines, some of them learned, others absurd, and all unintelligible, remains in doubt and uncertainty. One reflection however has struck us: in reviewing so many prodigious facts, so many contradictory assertions, we could not avoid asking ourselves, Of what importance to us are all these discussions? Where is the necessity of our knowing what happened five or six thousand years ago, in countries of which we are ignorant, among men who will ever be unknown to us? True or false, of what importance is it to us to know whether the world has existed six thousand

years or twenty thousand; whether it was made of something or of nothing; of itself, or by an artificer, equally in his turn requiring an author? What! uncertain as we are of what is passing around us, shall we pretend to ascertain what is transacting in the sun, the moon and imaginary spaces? Having forgotten our own infancy shall we pretend to know the infancy of the world? Who can attest what he has never seen? Who can certify the truth of what no one comprehends?

"Beside, what will it avail as to our existence whether we believe or reject these chimeras? Hitherto neither our fathers nor ourselves have had any idea of them, and yet we do not perceive that on that account we have experienced more or less sun, more or less subsistence, more or less good or evil.

"If the knowledge of these things be necessary, how is it that we have lived as happily without it as those whom it has so much disquieted? If it be superfluous, why should we now take upon ourselves the burthen?" Then addressing himself to the doctors and theologians: "How can it be required of us, poor and ignorant as we are, whose every moment is scarcely adequate to the cares of our subsistence and the labours of which you reap the profit; how can it be required of us to be versed in the numerous histories you have related, to read the variety of books which you have quoted, and to learn the different languages in which they are written? If our lives were protracted to a thousand years, scarcely would it be sufficient for this purpose."

"It is not necessary," said the doctors, "that you should acquire all this science: we possess it in your stead."

"Meanwhile," replied these children of simplicity, "with all your science, do you agree among yourselves? What then is its utility? Besides, how can you answer for us? If the faith of one man may be the substitute of the faith of many, what need was there that you should believe? Your fathers might believe for you; and that would have been the more reasonable, since they were the eye-witnesses upon whose credit you depend.—Lastly, what is this circumstance which you call belief if it has no practical tendency? And what practical tendency can you discover in this question, whether or no the world be eternal?

"To believe wrong respecting it would be offensive to God," said the doctors.

"How do you know that?" cried the children of simplicity.

"From our scriptures," replied the doctors.

"We do not understand them," rejoined the simple men.

"We understand them for you," said the doctors.

"There lies the difficulty," resumed the simple men. "By what right have you appointed yourselves mediators between God and us?"

"By the command of God," said the doctors.

"Give us a proof of that command," said the simple men.

"It is in our scriptures," said the doctors.

"We do not understand them," answered the simple men, "nor can we understand how *a just God* can place you over our heads.—Why does our *common Father* require us to believe the same propositions with a less degree of evidence? He has spoken to you;

be it so: he is infallible, he cannot deceive you. But we are spoken to by you; and who will assure us that you are not deceived, or that you are incapable of deceiving? If we are mistaken, how can it consist with the justice of God to condemn us for the neglect of a rule with which we were never acquainted?"

"He has given you the law of nature," said the doctors.

"What is the law of nature?" said the simple men. "If this law be sufficient, why does he give us another? If it be insufficient, why did he give us that?"

The judgments of God," replied the doctors, "are mysterious; his justice is not restrained by the rules of human justice."

"If justice with him and with us," said the simple men, "mean a different thing, what criterion can we have to judge of his justice? And once more, to what purpose all these laws? What end does he propose by them?"

"To render you more happy," replied a doctor, "by rendering you better and more virtuous. God has manifested himself by so many oracles and prodigies to teach mankind the proper use of his benefits, and to dissuade them from injuring each other."

"If that be the case," said the simple men, "the studies and reasonings you told us of are unnecessary: we want nothing but to have it clearly made out to us which is the religion that best fulfils the end that all propose to themselves."

Instantly, every groupe boasting of the superior excellence of its morality, there arose among the partisans of the different systems of worship, a new dispute,

more violent than any preceding one. "*Ours,*" *said* the Mahometans, "is the purest morality *which* teaches every virtue useful to men and acceptable to God. We profess justice, disinterestedness, resignation, charity, alms-giving, and devotion. We torment not the soul with superstitious fears; we live free from alarm, and we die without remorse."

"And have you the presumption," replied the Christian priests, "to talk of morality? You, whose chief has practised licentiousness, and preached doctrines that are a scandal to all purity, and the leading principle of whose religion is homicide and war. For the truth of this we appeal to experience. For twelve centuries past your fanaticism has never ceased to spread desolation and carnage through the nations of the earth: and that Asia, once so flourishing, now languishes in insignificance and barbarism, is ascribable to your doctrine: to that doctrine the friend of ignorance, the enemy of all instruction, which, on the one hand consecrating the most absolute despotism in him who commands, and on the other imposing the most blind and passive obedience on those who are governed, has benumbed all the faculties of man, and plunged nations in a state of brutality.

"How different is the case with our sublime and celestial morality! It is she that drew the earth from *its* primitive barbarity, from the absurd and cruel superstitions of idolatry, from human sacrifices,* and the orgies of Pagan mystery: it is she that has purified the

* Read the cold declaration Eusebius (*Præp. Evang. lib.* 1. *p.* 11.) who pretends that, since the coming of Christ, there have neither been wars, nor tyrants, nor cannibals, nor sodomites, nor persons committing incest, nor savages destroying their parents, *&c.* When we read of these fathers of the church we are astonished at their insincerity or infatuation.

manners of men, proscribed incest and adultery, polished savage nations, abolished slavery, introduced new and unknown virtues to the world, universal charity, the equality of mankind in the eyes of God, forgiveness and forgetfulness of injuries, extinction of the passions, contempt of worldly greatness, and in short, taught the necessity of a life perfectly holy and spiritual."

"We admire," said the Mahometans, "The ease with which you can reconcile the evangelical charity and meekness of which you so much boast, with the injuries and outrages that you are continually exercising towards your neighbour. When you criminate with so little ceremony the morals of the great character revered by us, we have a fair opportunity of retorting upon you in the conduct of him whom you adore; but we disdain such advantages, and, confining ourselves to the real object of the question, we maintain that your gospel morality is by no means characterised by the perfection which you ascribe to it. It is not true that it has introduced into the world new and unknown virtues: for example, the equality of mankind in the eyes of God, and the fraternity and benevolence which are the consequence of this equality, were tenets formerly professed by the sect of *Hermetics* and *Samaneans*,* from whom you have your descent. As to forgiveness of injuries, it had been taught by the Pagans themselves; but in the latitude you give to it, it ceases to be a virtue, and becomes an immorality and a crime. Your boasted precept, to him that strikes thee on thy right

* The equality of mankind in a state of nature and in the eyes of God, was one of the principal tenets of the Samaneans, and they appear to be the only ancients that entertained this opinion.

cheek turn the other also, is not only contrary to the feelings of man, but a flagrant violation of every principle of justice; it emboldens the wicked by impunity, degrades the virtuous by the servility to which it subjects them; delivers up the world to disorder and tyranny, and dissolves the bands of society: such is the true spirit of your doctrine. The *precepts* and *parables* of your gospel also never represent God other than as a despot, acting by no rule of equity, than as a partial father, treating a debauched and prodigal son with greater favour than his obedient and virtuous children; than as a capricious master giving the same wages to him who has wrought but one hour, as to those who have borne the burthen and heat of the day, and preferring the last comers to the first. In short, your morality throughout is unfriendly to human intercourse, a code of misanthropy, calculated to give men a disgust for life and society, and attach them to solitude and celibacy.

"With respect to the manner in which you have practised your boasted doctrine, we in our turn appeal to the testimony of fact, and ask: was it your evangelical meekness and forbearance which excited those endless wars among your sectaries, those atrocious persecutions of what you called heretics, those crusades against the *Arians*, the *Manicheans*, and the *Protestants*; not to mention those which you have committed against us, nor the sacrilegious associations still subsisting among you, formed of men sworn to perpetuate them?* Was it the charity of your gospel that led

* The oath taken by the knights of the Order of Malta, is to kill, or make the Mahometans prisoners, for the glory of God.

you to exterminate whole nations in *America*, and to destroy the empires of *Mexico* and *Peru*; that makes you still desolate *Africa*, the inhabitants of which you sell like cattle, notwithstanding the abolition of slavery that you pretend your religion has effected; that makes you ravage *India* whose domains you usurp; in short, is it charity that has prompted you for three centuries past to disturb the peaceable inhabitants of three continents, the most prudent of whom, those of *Japan* and *China*, have been constrained to banish you from their country that they might escape your chains, and recover their domestic tranquility?"

Here the *Bramins*, the *Rabbins*, the *Bonzes*, the *Chamans*, the *priests* of the Molucco islands and of the coast of Guinea, overwhelming the *Christian doctors* with reproaches, cried: "Yes, these men are robbers and hypocrites, preaching simplicity to inveigle confidence; humility, the more easy to enslave; poverty, in order to appropriate all riches to themselves; they promise another world, the better to invade this; and, while they preach toleration and charity, they commit to the flames, in the name of God, those who do not worship him exactly as they do."

"Lying priests," retorted the missionaries, "it is you who abuse the credulity of ignorant nations, that you may bend them to your yoke: your ministry is the art of imposture and deception: you have made religion a system of avarice and cupidity: you feign to have correspondence with spirits, and the oracles they issue are your own wills: you pretend to read the stars, and your desires are only what destiny decrees: you make idols speak, and the Gods are the mere instru-

ments of your passions: you have invented sacrifices and libations for the sake of the profit you would thus derive from the milk of the flocks, and the flesh and fat of victims: and, under the cloak of piety, you devour the offerings made to Gods who cannot eat, and the substance of the people, obtained by industry and toil."

"And you," replied the Bramins, the Bonzes and the Chamans, "Sell to the credulous survivor vain prayers for the souls of his dead relatives. With your indulgencies and absolutions you have arrogated to yourselves the power and functions of *God himself*; and, making a traffic of his grace, you have put heaven up to auction, and have founded by your system of expiation, a tariff of crimes that has perverted the consciences of men."*

"Add to this," said the Imans, "that with these men has originated the most insidious of all wickedness, the absurd and impious obligation of recounting to them the most impenetrable secrets of actions, of thoughts of velleties (confession;) by means of which their insolent curiosity has carried its inquisition even to the sacred sanctuary of the nuptial bed,† and the inviolable asylum of the heart."

* As long as it shall be possible to obtain a purification from crimes, and exemption from punishment, by means of money and other frivolous practices; as long as kings and great men shall suppose that building temples and instituting foundations, will absolve them from the guilt of oppression and homicide; as long as individuals shall imagine that they may rob and cheat, provided they observe fast during lent, go to confession, and receive extreme unction, it is impossible there should exist in society any morality or virtue; and it is from a deep conviction of truth, that a modern philosopher has called the doctrine of expiations *la verole des societes*.

† The Mussulmen, who suppose women to have no souls, are shocked at the idea of confession, and say; how can an honest man think of listening to the recital of the actions or the secret thoughts of a woman? May we not also ask, on the other hand, how can an honest woman consent to reveal them?

By thus reproaching each other, the chiefs of the different worships revealed all the crimes of the ministry, all the hidden vices of their profession, and it appeared that the spirit, the system of conduct, the action and manners of priests were among all nations, uniformly the same; that, every where they had formed secret associations, corporations of individuals enemies to the rest of the society;*—that they had attributed to themselves certain prerogatives and immunities, in order to be exempt from the burthens which fell upon the other classes:—that they shared neither the toil of the labourer, nor the perils of the soldier, nor the vicissitudes of the merchant;—that they led a life of celi-

* That we may understand the general feelings of priests respecting the rest of mankind, whom they always call by the name of the people, let us hear one of the doctors of the church. "The people," says Bishop Synnesius, *in Calvit. page* 315, "are desirous of being deceived, we cannot act otherwise respecting them.—The case was similar with the ancient priests of Egypt, and for this reason they shut themselves up in their temples, and there composed their mysteries out of the reach of the eye of the people." And forgetting what he had just before said, he adds: "for had the people been in the secret they might have been offended at the deception played upon them. In the mean time how is it possible to conduct one's-self otherwise with the people so long as they are the people? For my own part, to myself I shall always be a philosopher, but in dealing with the mass of mankind I shall be a priest."

"A little jargon," says Gregory Nazienzen to St. Jerome (*Hieron. ad Nep.*) "is all that is necessary to impose on the people. The less they comprehend, the more they admire. Our forefathers and doctors of the church have often said, not what they thought, but what circumstances and necessity dictated to them."

"We endeavour," says Sanchoniaton, "to excite admiration by means of the marvellous." (*Præp. Evang. lib.* 3.)

Such was the conduct of all the priests of antiquity, and is still that of the Brahmins and Lamas, who are the exact counterpart of the Egyptian priests. Such was the practice of the Jesuits, who marched with hasty strides in the same career. It is useless to point out the whole depravity of such a doctrine. In general every association which has mystery for its basis, or an oath of secrecy, is a league of robbers against society, a league divided in its very bosom into knaves and dupes, or in other words, agents and instruments. It is thus we ought to judge of those modern clubs, which, under the name of Illuminatists, Martinists, Cagliostronists, Free-masons and Mesmerites, infest Europe. These societies are the follies and deceptions of the ancient Cabalists, Magicians, Orphics, &c. who, says Plutarch, led into errors of considerable magnitude, not only individuals, but kings and nations.

bacy to avoid domestic inconveniences and cares :—that, under the garb of poverty, they found the secret of becoming rich, and of procuring every enjoyment :—that, under the name of mendicants, they collected imposts more considerable than those paid to princes :—that under the appellation of gifts and offerings, they obtained a certain revenue unaccompanied with trouble or expense :—that upon the pretext of seclusion and devotion, they lived in indolence and licentiousness :—that they had made alms a virtue, that they might subsist in comfort upon the labour of other men :—that they had invented the ceremonies of worship to attract the reverence of the people, calling themselves the *mediators* and *interpreters* of the Gods with the sole view of assuming all his *power*; and that for this purpose, according to the knowledge or ignorance of those upon whom they had to work, they had made themselves, by turns, *astrologers*, *casters* of *planets*, *augurers*, *magicians*,* *necromancers*, *quacks*, *courtiers*, *confessors of princes*, always aiming at influence for their own exclusive advantage :—that sometimes

* What is a magician, in the sense in which people understand the word? a man who by words and gestures pretends to act on supernatural beings, and compel them to descend at his call, and obey his orders. Such was the conduct of the ancient priests, and such is still that of all priests in idolatrous nations, for which reason we have given them the denomination of magicians.

And when a Christian priest pretends to make God descend from heaven, to fix him to a morsel of leaven, and to render, by means of this talisman, souls pure and in a state of grace, what is all this but a trick of magic? And where is the difference between a Chaman of Tartary, who invokes the genii, or an Indian Bramin, who makes his Vichenou descend in a vessel of water to drive away evil spirits? Yes, the identity of the spirit of priests in every age and country is fully established! Every where it is the assumption of an exclusive privilege, the pretended faculty of moving at will the powers of nature; and this assumption is so direct a violation of the right of equality, that whenever the people shall regain their importance, they will forever abolish this sacrilegious kind of nobility, which has been the type and parent stock of the other species of nobility.

they had exalted the prerogative of kings and held their persons to be sacred, to obtain their favour or participate in their power:—that at others they had decried this doctrine and preached the murder of tyrants (reserving it to themselves to specify the tyranny,) in order to be revenged of the slights and disobedience they had experienced from them:—that at all times they had called impiety what proved injurious to their interest; had opposed public instruction, that they might monopolize science; and, in short, had universally found the secret of living in tranquility amidst the *anarchy* they occasioned; secure under the despotism they sanctioned; in indolence, amidst the industry they recommended; and in abundance, in the very bosom of scarcity; and all this, by carrying on the singular commerce of selling words and gestures to the credulous, who paid for them as for commodities of the greatest value.*

Then the people, seized with fury, were upon the point of tearing to pieces the men who had deceived them; but the *legislators*, arresting this sally of violence, and addressing the chiefs and doctors, said: And

* A curious work would be the comparative history of the *agnuses* of the pope and the *pastils* of the grand Lama. It would be worth while to extend this idea to religious ceremonies in general, and to confront, column by column, the analogous or contrasting points of faith and superstitious practices in all nations. There is one more species of superstition which it would be equally salutary to cure, blind veneration for the great; and for this purpose it would be alone sufficient to write a minute detail of the private life of kings and princes. No work could be so philosophical as this: and accordingly we have seen what a general outcry was excited among kings and the panders of kings, when the Anecdote of the Court of Berlin first appeared. What would be the alarm were the public put in possession of the sequel of this work? Were the people fairly acquainted with all the crimes and all the absurdities of this species of idol, they would no longer be exposed to covet their specious pleasures, of which the plausible and hollow appearance disturbs their peace and hinders them from enjoying the much more solid happiness of their own condition.

is it thus, O institutor of the people, that you have misled and abused them ?"

And the terrified priests replied : " O legislators, we are men, and the people are so superstitious! their weakness excited us to take advantage of it."*

And the king said : "O legislators, the people are so servile and so ignorant; they have prostrated themselves before the yoke which we scarcely had the boldness to show to them."†

Then the legislators turning towards the *people*, said to them: "Remember what you have just heard; it contains two important truths. Yes, it is yourselves that cause the evils of which you complain ; it is you that encourage tyrants by a base flattery of their power, by an absurd admiration of their pretended beneficence, by converting obedience into servility, and liberty into licentiousness, and receiving every imposition with credulity. Can you think of punishing upon them the errors of your own ignorance and selfishness ?"

And the people, smitten with confusion, remained in a melancholy silence.

CHAP. XXIV.

SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF CONTRADICTIONS.

The legislators then resumed their address. "O nations!" said they, "we have heard the discussion of your opinions; and the discord that divides you has

* Consider in this view the Brabanters.

† The inhabitants of Vienna, for example, who harnessed themselves like cattle, and drew the chariot of Leopold.

suggested to us various reflections, which we beg leave to propose to you as questions which it is necessary that you should solve.

"Considering, in the first place, the numerous and contradictory creeds you have adopted, we would ask on what motives your persuasion is founded: Is it from deliberate choice that you have enlisted under the banners of one *prophet* rather than under those of another? Before you adopted this *doctrine* in preference to that, did you first compare, did you maturely examine them? Or has not your belief been rather the chance result of birth, and of the empire of education and habit? Are you not born *Christians* on the banks of the Tiber, *Mahometans* on those of Euprates, *Idolaters* on the shores of India, in the same manner as you are born fair in cold and temperate regions, and of a sable complexion under the African sun? And if your opinions are the effect of your position on the globe, of parentage, of imitation, are such fortuitous circumstances to be regarded as grounds of conviction, and arguments of truth?

"In the second place, when we reflect on the proscriptive spirit and the arbitrary intolerance of your mutual claims, we are terrified at the consequences that flow from your principles. *Nations!* who reciprocally doom each other to the thunderbolts of celestial wrath, suppose the *universal Being*, whom you revere, were at this moment to descend from heaven among this crowd of people, and, clothed in all his power, were to sit upon this throne to judge you: suppose him to say—"Mortals! I consent to adopt your own principles of justice into my administration. Of all the

different religions you profess a single religion shall now be preferred to the rest; all the others, this vast multitude of standards, of nations, of prophets, shall be condemned to everlasting destruction. Nor is this enough; among the different sects of the *chosen religion* one only shall experience my favour, and the rest be condemned. I will go farther than this: of this single sect of this one religion, I will reject all the individuals whose conduct has not corresponded to their speculative precepts. O man! few indeed will then be the number of the elect you assign me! Penurious hereafter will be the stream of beneficence which will succeed to my unbounded mercy! Rare and solitary will be the catalogue of admirers that you henceforth destine to my greatness and my glory."

And the *legislators* rising said; "It is enough; you have pronounced your will. Ye nations, behold the urn in which your names shall be placed; one single name shall be drawn from the multitude: approach and conclude this terrible lottery."—But the people, seized with terror, cried: "No, no; we are brethren and equals, we cannot consent to condemn each other."—Then the legislators having resumed their seats, continued: "O men! who dispute upon so many subjects, lend an attentive ear to a problem we submit to you, and decide it in the exercise of your own judgments." The people accordingly lent the strictest attention; and the legislators lifting one hand towards heaven, and pointing to the sun, said: "O nations, is the form of this sun which enlightens you triangular or square?"—And they replied with one voice, "It is neither, it is round."

Then taking the golden balance that was upon the altar, "This metal," asked the legislators, "which you handle every day, is a mass of it heavier than another mass of equal dimensions of brass?"—"Yes," the people again unanimously replied; "gold is heavier than brass."

The legislators then took the sword. "Is this iron less hard than lead?"—"No," said the nations.

"Is sugar sweet and gall bitter?"—"Yes."

"Do you love pleasure, and hate pain?"—"Yes."

"Respecting these objects and a multiplicity of others of a similar nature, you have then, but one opinion. Now tell us, is there an abyss in the centre of the earth, and are there inhabitants in the moon?"

At this question, a general noise was heard, and every nation gave a different answer. Some replied in the affirmative, others in the negative; some said it was probable, others that it was an idle and ridiculous question, and others that it was a subject worthy of inquiry; in short, there prevailed among them a total disagreement.

After a short interval, the legislators having restored silence: "Nations," said they, "How is this to be accounted for? We proposed to you certain questions, and you were all of one opinion without distinction of race or sect: fair or black, disciples of *Mahomet* or of *Moses*, worshippers of *Bedou* or *Jesus*, you all gave the same answer. We now propose another question, and you all differ! whence this unanimity in one case and this discordance in the other?"

And the groupe of simple and untaught men replied: "The reason is obvious. Respecting the first ques-

tions, we see and feel the objects ; we speak of them from sensation : respecting the second, they are above the reach of our senses, and we have no guide but conjecture."

"You have solved the problem," said the legislators ; "and the following truth is thus by your *own* confession established : Whenever objects are present and can be judged of by your senses, you invariably agree in opinion ; and you differ in sentiment only when they are absent, and out of your reach.

"From this truth flows another equally clear and deserving of notice. Since you agree respecting what you with certainty know, it follows, that when you disagree, it is because you do not know, do not understand, are not sure of the object in question : or in other words, that you dispute, quarrel and fight among yourselves, for what is uncertain, for that of which you doubt. But is this wise ? Is this the part of rational and intelligent beings ?

"And is it not evident, that it is not *truth* for which you contend ; that it is not her cause you are jealous of maintaining, but the cause of your own *passions* and *prejudices ;* that it is not the object as it really exists that you wish to verify, but the object as it appears to you ; that it is not the evidence of the thing that you are anxious should prevail, but your personal opinion, your mode of seeing and judging ? There is a *power* that you want to exercise, an *interest* that you wan maintain, a *prerogative* that you want to assume ; short, the whole is a struggle of *vanity.* And as eve individual, when he compares himself with the oth finds himself to be his equal and fellow, he resists b

similar feeling of right; and from this right which you all deny to each other, and from the inherent consciousness of your equality, spring your *disputes*, your *combats* and your *intolerance*.

"Now, the only way of restoring unanimity is by returning to nature, and taking the order of things which she has established for your director and guide; and this farther truth will then appear from your uniformity of sentiment.

"That real objects have in themselves an identical, constant, and invariable mode of existence, and that in your organs exists a similar mode of being affected and impressed by them.

"But at the same time, inasmuch as these organs are liable to the direction of your will, you may receive different impressions, and find yourselves under different relations towards the same objects: so that you are with respect to them, as it were a sort of mirrour, capable of reflecting them such as they are, and capable of disfiguring and misrepresenting them.

"As often as you perceive the objects, such as they are, your feelings are in accord with the objects, and you agree in opinion; and it is this accord that constitutes truth.

"On the contrary, as often as you differ in opinion, your dissensions prove that you do not see the objects such as they are, but vary them.

"Whence it appears, that the cause of your dissensions is not in the objects themselves, but in your minds, in the manner in which you perceive and judge.

"If therefore we would arrive at uniformity of opinion, we must previously establish certainty, and verify

the resemblance which our ideas have to their models. Now this cannot be obtained, except so far as the objects of our enquiry can be referred to the testimony and subjected to the examination of our *senses*. Whatever cannot be brought to this trial is beyond the limits of our understanding; we have neither rule to *try* it by, nor measure by which to institute a comparison, nor source of demonstration and knowledge concerning it.

"Whence it is obvious, that, in order to live in peace and harmony, we must consent not to pronounce upon such subjects, nor to annex to them importance; we must draw a line of demarcation between such as can be verified and such as cannot, and separate by an inviolable barrier the world of fantastic beings from the world of realities: that is to say, all civil effect must be taken away from theological and religious opinions.

"This, O nations, is the end that a great people, freed from their fetters and prejudices, have proposed to themselves; this is the work in which by their command, and under their immediate auspices, we were engaged when your kings and your priests came to interrupt our labours. . . . *Kings* and *Priests*, you may yet a while suspend the solemn publication of the law of nature; but it is no longer in your power to annihilate or subvert them."

A loud cry was then heard from every quarter of the general assembly of nations; and the whole of t *people*, unanimously testifying their adherance to sentiments of the legislators, encouraged them to sume their sacred and sublime undertaking. "In..

tigate," said they, "the laws which nature, for our direction, has implanted in our breasts, and form from thence an authentic and immutable code. Nor let this code be calculated for one family, or one nation only, but for the whole without exception. Be the legislators of the human race, as ye are the interpreters of their common nature. Shew us the line that separates the world of chimeras, from that of realities; and teach us, *after so many religions of errour and delusion, the religion of evidence and truth.*"

Upon this, the legislators resuming their enquiry into the *physical* and *constituent* attributes of man, and the motives and affections which govern him in his individual and social capacity, unfolded in the following terms the law on which Nature herself has founded his felicity.

CONTROVERSY

BETWEEN

DR. PRIESTLY AND VOLNEY.

FROM THE ANTI-JACOBIN REVIEW.

THE WRANGLING PHILOSOPHERS.

IN 1797, *Dr. Priestly published a pamphlet, entitled, "Observations on the increase of infidelity, with animadversions upon the writings of several modern unbelievers; and especially the Ruins of Mr. Volney. The motto to this tract was,*

"Minds of little penetration rest naturally on the surface of things. They do not like to pierce deep into them, for fear of labour and trouble; sometimes still more for fear of truth."

The following Letter is an answer from Volney, taken from the Anti-Jacobin Review of March and April, 1799.

FROM THE ANTI-JACOBIN REVIEW, FOR MARCH 1799.

VOLNEY'S ANSWER

TO

DR. PRIESTLY.

SIR,

I received in due time your pamphlet on the increase of infidelity, together with the note without date which accompanied it.* My answer has been delayed by the incidents of business, and even by ill health, which you will surely excuse: this delay has, besides, no inconvenience in it. The question between us is not of a very urgent nature: the world would not go on less well with or without my answer as with or without your book. I might, indeed, have dispensed with returning you any answer at all; and I should have been warranted in so doing, by the manner in which you have stated the debate, and by the opinion pretty generally received that, on certain occasions, and with certain persons, the most noble reply is silence. You seem to have been aware of this yourself, considering the extreme precautions you have taken to deprive me of

* Dr. Priestly sent his pamphlet to Volney, desiring his answer to the strictures on his opinions in his "Ruins of Empires."

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this resource; but as, according to our French customs, any answer is an act of civility, I am not willing to concede the advantage of politeness—besides, although silence is sometimes very significant, its eloquence is not understood by every one, and the public which has not leisure to analyze disputes (often of little interest) has a reasonable right to require at least some preliminary explanations; reserving to itself, should the discussion degenerate into the recriminative clamours of an irritated self-love, to allow the right of silence to him in whom it becomes the virtue of moderation.

I have read, therefore, your animadversions on my Ruins, which you are pleased to class among the writings of modern unbelievers; and since you absolutely insist on my expressing my opinion before the public, I shall now fulfil this rather disagreeable task with all possible brevity, for the sake of economising the time of our readers.

In the first place, Sir, it appears evidently, from your pamphlet, that your design is less to attack my book than my personal and moral character; and in order the public may pronounce with accuracy on this point, I submit several passages fitted to throw li[illegible] the subject.

You say, in the preface of your discourse [illegible]

'There are, however, unbelievers more ignorant [illegible]

Mr. Paine, Mr. Volney, Lequino, and others in France say,' &c.

Also in the preface of your present observations, p. 20. 'I can truly say that in the writings of Hume, Mr. Gibbon, Voltaire, Mr. Volney—there is nothing of solid argument: all abound in gross mistakes and misrepresentations.' Idem, p. 38—'Whereas had he (Mr. Volney) given attention to the history of the times in which christianity was promulgated. . . . he could have no more doubt . . . &c. it is as much in vain to argue with such a person as this, as with a Chinese or even a Hottentot.'

Idem, p. 119—'Mr. Volney, if we may judge from his numerous quotations of ancient writers in all the learned languages, oriental as well as occidental, must be acquainted with all; for he makes no mention of any translation, and yet if we judge from this specimen of his knowledge of them, he cannot have the smallest tincture of that of the Hebrew, or even of the Greek.'

And, at last, after having published and posted me in your very title page, as an unbeliever and an infidel; after having pointed me out in your motto as one of those superficial spirits who know not how to find out, and are unwilling to encounter, truth; you add, p. 124, immediately after an article in which you speak of me under all these denominations—

"The progress of infidelity, in the present age, is

attended with a circumstance which did not so frequently accompany it in any former period, at least, in England, which is, that unbelievers in revelation generally proceed to the disbelief of the being and providence of God so as to become properly atheists." So that, according to you, I am a Chinese, a Hottentot, an unbeliever, an Atheist, an ignoramous, a man of no sincerity; whose writings are full of nothing but gross mistakes and misrepresentations. Now I ask you, Sir, What has all this to do with the main question? What has my book in common with my person? And how can you hold any converse with a man of such bad connections? In the second place, your invitation, or rather, your summons to me, to point out the mistakes which, *I think you have made with respect to my opinions*, suggest to me several observations.

1st. You suppose that the public attaches a high importance to your mistakes and to my opinions: but I cannot act upon a supposition. Am I not an unbeliever?

2d. You say, p. 18, that the public *will expect it from me:* Where are the powers by which you make the public speak and act: is this also a revelation?

3d. You require me to point out your mistakes. do not know that I am under any such obligation have not reproached you with them: it is not, inde..., very correct to ascribe to me, by selection or indiscrit

inately, as you have done, all the opinions scattered through my book, since, having introduced many different persons, I was under the necessity of making them deliver different sentiments, according to their different characters. The part which belongs to me is that of traveller resting upon the ruins and meditating on the causes of the misfortunes of the human race. To be consistent with yourself you ought to have assigned to me that of the Hottentot or Samoyde savage, who argues with the Doctors, Chap. xxiii, and I should have accepted it; you have preferred that of the erudite historian, Chap. xxii, nor do I look upon this as a mistake; I discover, on the contrary, an insidious design to engage me in a duel of self-love before the public, wherein you would excite the exclusive interest of the spectators by supporting the cause which they approve; while the task which you would impose on me, would only, in the event of success, be attended with sentiments of disapprobation. Such is your artful purpose, that, in attacking me as doubting the existence of Jesus, you might secure to yourself, by surprise, the favour of every christian sect, although your own incredulity in his divine nature is not less subversive of Christianity than the profane opinion, which does not find in history the proof required by the English law to establish a fact: to say nothing of the extraordinary kind of pride assumed in the silent, but palpa-

ble, comparison of yourself to Paul and to Christ, by likening your labours to theirs as tending to the same object, p. 10, preface. Nevertheless, as the first impression of an attack always confers an advantage, you have some ground for expecting you may obtain the apostolic crown; unfortunately for your purpose I entertain no disposition to that of martyrdom: and however glorious it might be to me to fall under the arm of him who has overcome Hume, Gibbon, Voltaire and even Frederick II, I find myself under the necessity of declining your theological challenge for a number of substantial reasons.

1st. Because, to religious quarrels there is no end, since the prejudices of infancy and education almost unavoidably exclude impartial reasoning, and besides, the vanity of the champions becomes committed by the very publicity of the contest, never to give up a first assertion, whence result a spirit of sectarism and faction.

2d. Because no one has a right to ask of me an account of my religious opinions: every inquisition of this kind is a pretension to sovereignty, a first step towards persecution; and the tolerant spirit of this country, which you invoke, has much less in view to engage men to speak, than to invite them to be silent.

3d. Because supposing I do hold the opinions you attribute to me, I wish not to engage my vanity so as never to retract, nor to deprive myself of the resource

of a conversion on some future day after more ample information.

4th. And because, reverend Sir, if, in the support of your own theses, you should happen to be discomfited before the Christian audience, it would be a dreadful scandal: and I will not be a cause for scandal, even for the sake of good.

5th. Because in this metaphysical contest our arms are too unequal; you speaking in your mother tongue, which I scarcely lisp, might bring forth huge volumes, while I could hardly oppose pages; and the public, who would read neither production, might take the weight of the books for that of reasonings.

6th. And because being endowed with the gift of faith, in a pretty sufficient quantity, you might swallow in a quarter of an hour more articles than my logic would digest in a week.

7th. Because again, if you were to oblige me to attend your sermons, as you have compelled me to read your pamphlet, the congregation would never believe that a man powdered and adorned like any worldling, could be in the right against a man dressed out in a large hat, *with strait hair*,* and a mortified countenance, although the gospel, speaking of the pharisees of other times, who were unpowdered, says, that when one fasts he must annoint his head and wash his face.†

* Dr. Priestly has discarded his wig since he went to America, and wears his own hair. Editor A. J. Review.

† St. Matthew, Chapter VI. verses 16 and 17.

8th. Because finally, a dispute to one having nothing else to do, would be a gratification, while to me, who can employ my time better, it would be an absolute loss.

I shall not then, reverend Sir, make you my confessor in matters of religion, but I will disclose to you my opinion, as a man of letters, on the composition of your book. Having, in former days, read many works of theology, I was curious to find out whether by any chemical process you had discovered real beings in that world of invisibles; unfortunately I am obliged to declare to the public, which according to your expression, p. 19, "hopes *to be instructed, to be led into truth, and not into error by me,*" that I have not found in your book a single new argument, but the mere repetition of what is told over and over in thousands of volumes, the whole fruit of which has been to procure for their authors a cursory mention in the dictionary of heresies. You every where lay down that as proved which remains to be proved; with this peculiarity, that, as Gibbon says, firing away your double battery against those who believe too much, and those who believe too little, you hold out your own peculiar sensations as to the precise criterion of truth; so that we must all be just of your size in order to pass the gate of that New-Jerusalem which you are building. After this, your reputation as a divine might have

become problematical with me; but recollecting the principle of the association of ideas so well developed by Locke, whom you hold in estimation, and whom, for that reason I am happy to cite to you, although to him I owe that pernicious use of my understanding which makes me disbelieve what I do not comprehend—I perceive why the public having originally attached the idea of talents to the name of Mr. Priestly, doctor in chemistry, continued by habit to associate it with the name of Mr. Priestly, doctor in divinity; which however is not the same thing: an association of ideas the more vicious as it is liable to be moved inversely.* Happily you have yourself raised a bar of separation between your admirers, by advising us in the first page of your preface, that your present book is especially destined for *believers*. To co-operate, however, with you, sir, in this *judicious* design, I must observe that it is necessary to retrench two passages, seeing they afford the greatest support to the arguments of *unbelievers*.

You say, p. 15, "*What is manifestly contrary to natural reason cannot be received by it*"—and p. 62, "With respect to intellect, men and brute animals are

* Mr. Blair, doctor of divinity, and Mr. Black, doctor in chemistry, met at the coffee house in Edinburgh: a new theological pamphlet written by doctor Priestly was thrown upon the table, "Really," said Dr. Blair, "this man had better confine himself to chemistry, for he is absolutely ignorant in theology:"—"I beg your pardon," answered Dr. Black, "he is in the right, he is a minister of the gospel, he ought to adhere to his profession, for, in truth he knows nothing of chemistry."

born in the same state, having the same external senses, which are the only inlets to all ideas, and consequently the source of all the knowledge and of all the mental habits they ever acquire."

Now if you admit, with Locke, and with us infidels that every one has the right of rejecting whatever is contrary to his natural reason; and that all our ideas and all our knowledge are required only by the inlets of our external senses; What becomes of the system of revelation, and of that order of things in times past, which is so contradictory to that of the time present? unless we consider it as a dream of the human brain during the state of superstitious ignorance.—With these two single phrases, I could overturn the whole edifice of your faith. Dread not, however, sir, in me such overflowing zeal: for the same reason I have not the frenzy of martyrdom, I have not that of making proselytes. It becomes those ardent, or rather, acrimonious tempers, who mistake the violence of their sentiments, for the enthusiasm of truth; the ambition of noise and rumour, for the love of glory; and for the love of their neighbour, the detestation of his opinions, and the secret desire of dominion. As for me who have not received from nature the turbulent qualities of an apostle, and never sustained in Europe the character of a dissenter, I am come to America neither to agitate the conscience of men, nor to form a sect, nc

to establish a colony, in which, under the pretext of religion, I might erect a little empire to myself. I have never been seen evangelizing my ideas, either in temples or in public meetings. I have never likewise practised that quackery of beneficence, by which a certain divine, imposing a tax upon the generosity of the public, procures for himself the honours of a more numerous audience, and the merit of distributing at his pleasure a bounty which costs him nothing, and for which he receives grateful thanks dexterously stole from the original donors.—Either in the capacity of a stranger, or in that of a citizen, a sincere friend to peace, I carry into society neither the spirit of dissension, nor the desire of commotion; and because I respect in every one what I wish him to respect in me, the name of liberty is in my mind nothing else but the synonyma of justice; as a man, whether from moderation or indolence, a spectator of the world rather than an actor in it, I am every day less tempted to take on me the management of the minds or bodies of men: it is sufficient for an individual to govern his own passions and caprices. If by one of these caprices, I am induced to think it may be useful, sometimes to publish my reflections, I do it without obstinacy or pretension to that implicit faith, the ridicule of which you desire to impart to me, p. 123. My whole book of the Ruins which you treat so ungratefully, since you *thought it*

amusing, p. 122, evidently bears this character. By means of the contrasted opinions I have scattered through it, it breathes that spirit of doubt and uncertainty which appears to me the best suited to the weakness of the human mind, and the most adapted to its improvement, inasmuch as it always leaves a door open to new truths; while the spirit of dogmatism and immoveable belief, limiting our progress to a first received opinion, binds us at hazard, and without resource, to the yoke of error or falsehood, and occasions the most serious mischiefs to society; since by combining with the passions, it engenders fanaticism, which, sometimes misled and sometimes misleading, though always intolerant and despotic, attacks whatever is not of its own nature; drawing upon itself persecution when it is weak, and practising persecution when it is powerful; establishing a religion of terror, which annihilates the faculties, and vitiates the conscience: so that, whether under a political or a religious aspect, the spirit of doubt is friendly to all ideas of liberty, truth, or genius, while a spirit of confidence is connected with the ideas of tyranny, servility, and ignorance. If, as is the fact, our own experience and that of others daily teaches us that what at one time appeared true, afterwards appeared demonstrably false, how can we connect with our judgments that blind and presumptuous confidence which pursues those of others with so much

hatred? No doubt it is reasonable and even honest, to act according to our present feelings, and conviction: but if these feelings and their causes do vary by the very nature of things, how dare we impose upon ourselves or others an invariable conviction? How, above all, dare we require this conviction in cases where there is really no sensation, as happens in purely speculative questions, in which no palpable fact can be presented? Therefore when opening the book of nature, a more authentic one and more easy to be read than leaves of paper blackened over with Greek or Hebrew, when I reflected that the slightest change in the material world has not been in times past, nor is, at present, effected by the difference of so many religions and sects which have appeared and still exist on the globe, and the course of the seasons, the path of the sun, the return of rain and drought are the same for the inhabitants of each country, whether Christian, Mussulmen, Idolaters, Catholics, Protestants, &c. I am induced to believe that the universe is governed by laws of wisdom and justice very different from those which human ignorance and intolerance would enact. And as in living with men of very opposite religious persuasions, I have had occasion to remark that their manners were, nevertheless, very analogous; that is to say among the different Christian sects, among the Mahometans, and even among those people who were of

no sect—I have found men who practise all the virtues, public and private, and that too without affectation; while others who, were incessantly declaiming of God and religion, abandoned themselves to every vicious habit, which their belief condemned—I became convinced that Ethics, the doctrine of morality, are the only essential, as they are the only demonstrable, part of religion.—And as, by your own avowal, the only end of religion is to render men better, in order to add to their happiness, p. 62, I have concluded that there are but two great systems of religion in the world, that of good sense and beneficence, and that of malice and hypocrisy.

In closing this letter I find myself embarrassed by the nature of the sentiment which I ought to express to you; for in declaring as you have done, p. 123, that you do not care for *the contempt of such as me** (ignorant as you were of my opinion) you tell me plainly that you do not care for their esteem: I leave, there-

* "And what does it do for me here, except, perhaps, expose me to the contempt of *such men* as Mr. Volney, which, however, I feel myself pretty well able to bear?" p. 124. This language is the more surprising, as Dr. Priestly never received any thing from me but civilities. In the year 1791 I sent him a dissertation of mine on the chronology of the ancients, in consequence of some charts which he had himself published. His only answer was to abuse me in a pamphlet in 1792. After this first abuse, on meeting me here last winter, he procured me to be invited to dine with his friend Mr. Russell, at whose house he lodged; after having shewn me polite attentions at that dinner, he abuses me in his new pamphlet. After this second abuse he meets me in Spruce Street, and takes me by the hand as a friend, and speaks of me in a large company under that denomination. *Now I ask the public what kind of man is Dr. Priestly?*

fore, to your discernment and taste to determine the sentiment most congenial to my situation and your desert.

C. F. VOLNEY.

Philadelphia, March 10th, 1797.

P. S. I do not accompany this public letter with a private note to Dr. Priestly; because communications of that nature carry an appearance of bravado, which, even in exercising the right of a necessary defence, appear to me incompatible with decency and politeness.